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# UBALDO AND IRENE:

A HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

*FROM THE ITALIAN OF FATHER ANTONIO BRESCIANI, S. J.*

BY

ANNA T. SADLIER.

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VOLUME ONE.

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## P R E F A C E .

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It seems almost superfluous to call attention to the historical romance before us by any prefatory comments. The fame of Father Breseiani as among the first Catholic novelists of our day is long since established, and his name on the title-page of a volume suffices to recommend it. In this particular work, which fairly teems with information, the author has devoted himself in a special manner to the task of exposing the dark and deadly nature of secret organizations and their destructive influence on human society. He shows them to us in their true colors, as the enemies of justice and morality, leagued together over the whole surface of the globe for the subversion of religion and social order. He shows them as the enemy of the rich, whom they would despoil; and still more especially the enemy of the poor, whom with delusive hopes they would lead to deeper ruin. The better to carry out his designs, the author has chosen the troublous and eventful years between 1790 and 1814. Hence his assertions he shows to be borne out by fact. For each one he gives us the historical proof, so that we have not merely his own opinions, clothed in the disguise of fiction, but the terrible lesson of past events to justify them. He portrays all too vividly the horrors of the French Revolution, and presages the misfortunes that have since fallen upon Italy.

However, there is a brighter side to the picture; there are charming glimpses of home life in the castles and manors of Italy, far on the peaceful slopes of the Umbrian heights or deep in those wooded vales where the Cimbri have their dwellings. There are peeps into cloistered homes where the psalmodies of the sinless monks arise from amid perpetual snows and thinly-peopled solitudes, where these men of prayer lead angelic lives in the hermitages of Camaldoli or the Hospice of Monte Cenis. We fairly revel in Italian landscapes,



where sunsets of more than mortal beauty gild the hills to amber and the streams to silver. But as we gaze and gaze, and dream that we are scaling the rugged Apennines or praying at old traditionary shrines on mountain heights, the author, like the Rajah Runjeet Singh of the poet, transports us to the dim, mysterious Northland, where, on the illimitable snow-plains, we behold the scattered remnants of a noble army dead upon the plains or pursued to an appalling end by their semi-barbarous foes. Again, when least we expect it, we are hurried from the Piazza di San Marco, where we stand idly gazing out upon the lagoon, hearing dreamily the song of the gondoliers, to our own golden city of the west. We are present at the sittings of the Council of Ten, or the orgies of Cagliostro and his Egyptian masonry. We are at a court reception in the royal household of Savoy, or we visit in her prison the queen whose golden hair, so sadly turned to gray, was dyed with blood on the revolutionary guillotine. We are in familiar converse with the first Napoleon, or we follow the hapless Louis to his doom.

The book is a wonderful pageant, in which kings and peasants, monks and nobles, soldiers and ladies, sorcerers and bandits play their part upon a historic stage. But we feel that our preface is but detaining our readers. The curtain is about to rise, the panorama to pass before them in review.

The translator, who has endeavored to give a faithful reproduction of the work, claims their kind indulgence for any defects which may come under their observation. She is assured that they will give a passing thought to her toilsome task of rendering into English from their native Italian the vast mass of materials, and will consequently overlook wherein she may have failed. In some few instances it has been necessary, for the convenience of the publishers, to omit a few paragraphs. These omissions are, however, unimportant, save as anything from the author's pen is important; they are far from being essential to the thread of the romance, or even, we may say, to the completeness of the whole. Without further introduction, therefore, the translator offers to the American public "Ubaldo and Irene," which, in the opinion of many, is the greatest work of the illustrious Jesuit author.





## UBALDO AND IRENE.

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IN that portion of the Italian Tyrol known as the Val Lagarina, stretching out before the little hamlet of the Marani, is the valley of San Valentino, which rises wild and savage up the steep and wooded slopes to the summit of the great Alps, whose descent on the further side is covered with rich pasture lands, with dense forests, interspersed with fertile valleys, till it reaches the smiling valley of Vicentino, so thickly planted with apple-trees. At the outlet of this valley runs the royal road, which borders on the river Adige and leads into Germany; but at the point where it crosses the stream a little path diverges, turning to the right, and, extending over a gravelly soil, ends at the rugged side of the Fusi. At this point the bed of the river, filled as it is with shrubs, broom, lentisks, and junipers, is enclosed between two high rocks, and offers no other passage than a narrow and rugged margin, winding from jut to jut, and opening an abyss before the terrified eye.

This ruined mountain remains an impenetrable mystery to the naturalist's research. Dante, in

speaking of the Lavini di Marco, whose craggy height is exactly three miles from that of San Valentino, undermined and broken, says :

“ O per tremuolo, o per sostegno manco.” \*

Others pretend that in some remote cataclysms it was hurled down into the depths of the sea, which, dashing it with irresistible force among its gulfs and whirlpools, cleft it asunder, and cast it up again to the surface ; others believe that in the furious floods of the terrestrial deluge, by the force of the torrents rushing from the sublime heights of the mountain, various fragments of the rock were violently torn from their original source, and thrown here and there in these wild and gloomy regions. These latter attribute them to the primal glaciers, and, in a word, are of opinion that they are frozen and consolidated masses of fragments hurled with terrific noise from incandescent mountains, and ignited by subterranean fires which, heaving and vomiting prodigious masses, gave birth to these mountains, and, heaping the splinters thrown hap-hazard one upon the other, formed these rocks, which seem always liable to detach themselves, and crush, in their fall, all that might come in their way.

At an unexpected turn of the rock of Fusi the traveller, raising his eyes, perceives at a short distance above, and directly in front of him, an immense rock, so high and of such great extent that the eagle resting on its summit seems as a mere

\* By an earthquake, or by want of support.

speck in the boundless immensity of the heavens. The bold crag, to increase the marvel, seems, while falling forward itself, to rest, as it were, on the masses in front of it, thereby forming a bridge and a cavern over the bed of the stream. The bravest heart, when pausing and beholding that crumbling and overhanging rock, could not restrain a shudder of terrified admiration at the stupendous crag, which, suspended in the air, seems about to hurl into space the ponderous branches of the ancient oaks, whose verdant foliage is the sport of the impetuous winds which rush ceaselessly through these gloomy gorges.

Crossing the masses of rock which obstruct the narrow passage, the bank disengages itself and descends, rugged and stony, as far as the bed of the stream, which leads to that portion of the lofty mountain before described, naked and barren on the side near the valley, but covered and clothed on three sides by the green and tufted slopes of Prabubalo. There the road, ascending in a gentle slope behind the heights of the rock, becomes more and more thickly covered with green shrubs, which in the month of May are peopled with nightingales, larks, and thrushes, filling the still, sweet air with the most delicate warbling, and rejoicing the passing traveller, saddened by the masses of ruins and the sombre depths of the gulfs and caverns by which he has passed. Higher up the woods of beech-trees grow denser, while on the left arise majestically the ancient forests of pines, which shade the northern slope of the hill, and surround it

on that side as if with a circle, in the centre of which murmurs a fountain of cool, limpid water, collected in a natural basin formed of the stone of the mountain, and winding at length to the austere and pious shades of a hermitage.

Having reached at last the summit of the rock, the road widens out into a vast meadow of green grass, bedecked with gayly-colored flowers, and extends southward to the foot of the steep rock which overhangs the torrent of the valley; towards the east it descends gradually to cultivated fields; while the forest of pines borders it all upon the north and west. On the meadow-height, and in the midst of a plain, rises proudly the church of San Valentino—that venerated sanctuary where flock the people of the little town of Ala on indulgenced pilgrimages.

In the latter part of the year 1600 the citizens of Ala received from Rome these holy relics, and erected the noble temple and a beautiful house for the chaplain and for pilgrims. Then the relics were transported thither from the city in a costly silver shrine.

The road, which lay beside the stream of Ala, winding for more than three-quarters of a mile up the heights of Pozzo and Pianezzuolo till it reached the mountain sanctuary, was adorned with triumphal arches, and repositories hung with garlands of laurel and myrtle, while the ground was profusely strewn with flowers. Preceding the shrine came the Rosary Societies, in white robes with azure-blue capes; the Confraternity for the Dead, in black

gowns; and that of the Blessed Sacrament, in crimson robes; then followed the clerical cross, accompanied by the clergy; the shrine of the saint, carried by four levites in soutanes of scarlet brocade, the golden cords of the canopy held by other levites. Last of all came the dean, in surplice; the syndic and heads of the commonwealth, in surcoats of black velvet and elaborate wigs. The procession was closed by the people, in gowns and cloaks of scarlet, and the women wearing black veils over their high holiday head-dresses. The crowd was so great and the procession so long that the sacred shrine had ascended the mountain and entered the church before the last couple had left the gate of San Giovannino, at the beginning of the bridge of Ala.

Their blessed patron benignantly and liberally rewarded such faith and piety, delivering the city from the plague among animals, from famine, from drought, from floods, and from a thousand other public and private calamities. One of the most celebrated miracles has been commemorated by the painting in the church and hall of the presbytery, and still remains fresh and vivid in the memory of the peasants. Two oxen, harnessed to the plough, were ploughing in a field on the summit of a hill, when all at once, becoming dizzy, they rolled with the plough to the bottom of the abyss. The peasants, beholding this terrible accident, called upon the saint; but, having witnessed the fall of the beasts from such a terrible height, expected to find them dead, and at the same time bruised and



mangled. Going sadly down to discover and remove the flesh, they found, to their infinite astonishment, the two oxen still yoked together, standing upright, quietly browsing upon the blades of grass which grew in the clefts of the rocks, and the plough uninjured. The good people fell upon their knees to return thanks to the saint, then led the oxen back to the field, where they continued their interrupted ploughing as if nothing had happened. At the spot where the oxen fell arises from the stony bed of the stream a little meadow, always covered with green grass, and which, after so many years, is still verdant; whereas the torrent in its frequent overflowings might well have washed it away or choked it up with immense fragments of rock, earth, gravel, trunks of trees, and rubbish of all sorts, that little patch of ground, after all the floods, remains ever green and flourishing even to the present time.

In thanksgiving for this and numberless other prodigies the church is filled with *ex-voto* offerings, and within, on either side of the principal door, are to be seen two immense benches, loaded with wax figures representing little children, human limbs which the piety of the faithful offered to the saint in thanksgiving for graces obtained; the pillars are covered with crutches, poignards, knives, swords, pistols, guns, bugles—all tokens of dangers escaped, from robbers, bandits, traitors, or in the strife and party wrangling which at that time still divided

“Quelli che un muro ed uno fossa serra,” \*

\* “Those whom a wall and a moat kept together.”

as the poet says ; for the Tyrol was at that time, like every other country, infested by bands of brigands, or cut-throats, or powerful marauding citizens, who did not disappear till the coming of the French.

For the hermit-guardian of the sanctuary they had constructed a little hermitage to the north of the church, just above the beautiful stream of fresh water which runs without the sombre and venerable forest of pines. The hermitage communicated with the church by a door and secret passage, that the pious hermit might at all hours keep lighted the lamps which burned unceasingly before the Blessed Sacrament.

From this hermitage was the most beautiful view of the valley of the Adige ; because from that height can be discerned the course of the great river, which descends swift and clear, with its countless windings, its islets and fisheries, its banks covered with poplars and elms, and on the transparent waters the heavy rafts which the raftsmen endeavor to keep in the middle of the river to avoid the turns, the currents, the gulfs, and other obstacles which obstruct and impede its course. On the other side of the bank are seen the barks being drawn up against the current by a dozen or eighteen horses ; they come from Italy, laden with wheat, rice, and flour for the German trade. Further on the eye perceives the little old church of Santa Margherita, and, surrounded by trees, the ruins of a little castle ; still further on the rock rises suddenly, and at its feet is the village of Serravalle, the

scene of so many encounters between the French and Germans in the then recent war. It was there that in November, 1813, Prince Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy, made a last effort to reach the valley of Lenno and fall upon the rear of the German forces, who, having crossed the Piave, then threatened Venice; but the stronghold of Serravalle was so well guarded that the viceroy, after having sacked the city of Ala, retreated to Verona.

From the esplanade in front of the church of San Valentino opens a new and beautiful view, including the little borough of Pilcante, and descending as far as the castle of Avio, whose sombre towers crown the heights, on the borders of which the vineyards and orchards of Bresavola and of the Venturi rejoice the sight. At noon the sight extends as far as the very ancient church of San Pietro in Bosco,\* which was erected by the Lombards, and to which the popes granted the remission of sin and its temporal punishment, and which, in consequence, became a place of refuge and of pilgrimage for those haughty Teutons who would fain profit by the indulgences. At that remote period this spot must have been utterly wild and covered with dense forests. In our own days are yet seen, for they are still standing, the great oak of the catechumens, and the ash-tree of penitents who were under the ban of canonical penance, and could not enter the church during Mass. The sight of that venerable temple elevates and touches

\* St. Peter of the Woods.



the soul, recalling those past centuries, those ages of lively, sincere faith, which calmed and softened the ferocity of those uncultivated and almost savage people.

To the sanctuary of San Valentino, situated on that craggy steep, held in such deep veneration, enlivened by such beautiful views—to this solitary, peaceful spot, full of cool retreats, of placid shades, of smiling meadows, of fragrant pine forests, of limpid, murmuring streams, came, in the spring and summer months, the citizens of Ala to visit the shrine of the saint, to hear Mass, and then partake of their morning meal in a meadow or wooded glade, or in the little presbytery, and sometimes dine there, returning to the city in the evening. These were days full of sweetness, when, leaving behind the din of city life, each one enjoyed the pure air, the sweet liberty of the woods, and this solitary but delightful spot; the youths climbed the heights of Prabubalo in search of birds' nests, hearing as they went the sweet trills of the nightingale, the cooing of the doves, and the warbling of the mountain pigeons; the young girls ran hither and thither in search of flowers of beautiful tint and fresh, sweet fragrance, and wove them into garlands and wreaths to adorn the altar of the saint or to grace the festive board. Studious men, stretched in the shade of a pine, on the banks of the stream, fanned by the gentle zephyrs, enjoyed to the full the "Bucolics" and the "Georgics" of Virgil, the tender elegies of Tibullo, Alamanni's poem of the "Cultivation," or some other literary treat.

Grave men threw aside their cares, walked about conversing with each other, or playing cards or checkers. Everything here breathed of rest, peace, and relaxation, the serene and quiet calm of those souls who can enjoy the happiness of domestic life, the tranquillity of the middle classes; for the world, at that time, was not then disturbed by those who, to render themselves, as they think, rich, prosperous, and happy, commence by overturning society, and by a system of rapine and plunder which plunges all things into a sea of blood and tears.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST AND LAST YEARS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

It was a lovely morning in the May of the year 1792, rising, fresh and clear, over the valley of San Valentino, beautifying the woods with a thousand gay tints, and painting the trees with the varied hues of the youthful spring. On the young boughs of the trees buds and blossoms of light, transparent green were bursting into life, and mingling every variety of foliage in one gay, cheerful whole which charms and delights the eye.

Nightingales sang in the clusters of filbert, cornel, and walnut trees; from the hedge-sides warbled the lark and the swallow, while blackbird, thrush, and linnet enlivened the surrounding forests. The stream, swollen by the melting ice and snow, received and carried downwards to the Adige the clear, pure water of the fountains, streams, and cascades of the mountains, with a gentle murmur, raising among the stones a white, fleeting foam, like strings of pearls resting on very small pebbles of azure, vermilion, or yellow tint, on which the foot of a shepherdess, in search of a stray lamb, had alone trodden.

About three o'clock, just when the sun, passing the highest peak of the mountain, reigned radiant over the immense vault of the sapphire heaven, when the mild breezes sported with the opening leaves, a grand cavalcade of knights, pursuing the rugged road of Fusi to the heights of San Valentino, appeared above the horizon. They were the noblest citizens of Ala, accompanying Count d'Almavilla, who had just arrived from Turin on a visit to his friend, Giuseppe Pizzini, of Hochenbrunn, who, to do honor to his guest, had invited his nephews, Domenico, Antonio, and Prospero, with other lords, to escort him, to spend a pleasant day at the sanctuary. There were present the young Mauro Gresti of Leonardsberg; Giovanni, son of Baron Antoniode Taddei; Giacomini Angelini of Anglesperg; Giuseppe, Count of Braga; Giampaolo Ferrari; Nicolo de Taddei, with other elegant youths of the houses of Pandolfi and Malfatti.\* Count d'Almavilla was accompanied by his daughter Lauretta, who was seventeen years old, and with her the charming Lida, her most valued friend. These ladies were accompanied by the three damsels of Hochenbrunn, and Isabella of Leonardsberg, all of whom enlivened the journey with their merry chatter.

Count d'Almavilla was the son of the Marquis di San Roberto, who, being very rich in lands and castles, was lord of a great extent of country

\* All these Tyrolean personages are historical, and known to the author in his early youth; several of them were still living in 1830.

between Sesia and Lake Maggiore, which, before the cession made by Austria to Savoy, belonged to Lombardy. He also possessed considerable land in Varese and Brianza. Living magnificently at the court of Victor Amadeus III., King of Sardinia, being a feudatory of that crown, and also at the court of Milan, where then reigned the Archduke Ferdinand, brother of Emperor Joseph II. and Leopold, the father of the count had, by his immoderate luxury, burdened his immense patrimony with old and new debts, as frequently happened, in those peaceful and prosperous times, to the great Italian lords. This old marquis was, however, a model of the ancient loyalty and urbanity of manners; he was brave and courteous, and, having fought bravely in the army of Savoy, spent his last days in holding high festival with his friends in his castle of San Roberto.

The castle stood in the midst of an elevated plain, on the summit of a beautiful hill overlooking a charming valley of rich pasture lands, watered with clear, running streams which emptied into a swift, tumultuous river that, after many windings, flowed into and mingled with the river Po. The building was in the square, massive style of the fourteenth century, turreted at the four angles with well-fortified round towers, and in the sixteenth century by breaches and cross-bows placed at the edge of the moat, ready to discharge the bows, culverin, and other weapons, and prevent the place from being taken by assault. These four towers were crowned by a platform covered and crenelat-



ed ; the four courts were equally sheltered ; but somewhat later they closed the breaches and replaced them by large and handsome casements and elaborate ornaments of all kinds.

The entrance to the four courts was by four gates at the head of four flights of steps, a work of the seventeenth century, in the Borromean style, but rendered grand and imposing by the colossal figures of giants upholding it with their hands and upon their shoulders. At either side of the great gates the marquis had caused four small cannons to be placed, attached by four rings fastened and riveted to the iron railing of the steps.

In the port-holes of the four towers were placed guns and pieces of ordnance, to be used in the family festivals or times of public rejoicing. The marquis had displayed every day from the eastern tower the banner with his coat of arms, on which was quartered a black eagle in a field of gold, and a golden lion rampant in a scarlet field, in the centre of which were three stars in an azure field.

In the first apartment on the ground floor was a species of ancient *triclinium*, in which no change had been made for more than two hundred years. The walls were hung with shields and bucklers of joust and tournament, helmets, breastplates, armor for the legs and thighs, gauntlets, cuirasses, hauberks, morions, visors of all kinds. The helmets and casques were surmounted by crests of all factions, according to the taste or humor of the ancestors, who had it mounted at their pleasure in the German, French, or Italian tournaments. Lances,

battle-axes, javelins, pikes, garnished the racks, while on the other side were barbed arrows, bows, darts, and quivers. In the four corners of the hall were quivers of tilting lances, streamers, pennons, some of which were so ragged that it seemed well-nigh impossible to decipher the devices.

At the end of the hall, to the right, was the ancient private chapel, with small, Gothic windows of stained glass representing St. George, St. Martin, and St. Robert. The walls were adorned with pictures in wood, painted by pupils of Giotto. Here were to be seen portraits of ancient marquises and marchionesses, the former in military dress, the latter in silken attire; the ladies with coronets on their heads, their robes plain or draped, edged with gold lace, without trimming, tightened at the waist, and with a large, loose mantle. The whole ground floor of the castle in every apartment was furnished with benches and chests of walnut with wonderful carvings; massive bedsteads with counterpanes of moiré and damask, overlaid with wrought gold and silver, in the style of the fifteenth century, the wood of the bed cut in pillars, draped with filmy lace falling from beneath the golden apple which surmounted it, and the canopy formed of silken drapery, from which hung heavy tassels.

But the first story had been renovated by the grandfather of the present marquis, and all the apartments were sumptuously furnished, according to the odd taste of the seventeenth century, with Gobelin tapestry, brocade or velvet, and superb

floors of Chinese wood inlaid with ivory. The tables were of polished marble and precious stones, red or brown jasper, blue veined agate speckled with green or blood-red, the corners ornamented with violet-tinted chalcedony, agate washed with blue, or of white or variegated colors, encircled by a graceful band of gold. In the centre of these tables shone the blood-red ruby, the changing onyx, the purple amethyst, Egyptian pebbles, hyacinths, the red, yellow, and gray sardonyx.

But the most stately and imposing part of the furniture were the chests and cabinets of ebony, inlaid with jewels, surrounded by bands of gold, and ornamented with mirrors of Siberian onyx, with fossils of petrified wood, with rock crystals, with lapis-lazulæ, with tiny Cupids of coral skilfully mingled with little plates of gold or silver; this jewelled furniture, with its hundred little drawers, niches, shelves, secret recesses of every description, studded with garnets, turquoise, amber, and cornelian, all beautifully wrought and mingled in carvings, gildings, and filigree-work, executed with exquisite skill and art, being each one in its way a masterpiece, and which are now shown, with just pride, as trophies of art, in the museums of Florence, Rome, Vienna, and Paris. The mirrors were framed in tortoise-shell, with silver buds and flowers *in relief*; the chests were embroidered in gold, with panels of precious marbles; and the handles of the numerous drawers were heavily-chased, golden bronze in bunches or wreaths of flowers, serpents, birds, or animals, with



numberless arabesques, forming altogether rich and elegant ornaments, the fruit of the fertile imagination of that cunning and most ingenious age.

The apartments were beautifully frescoed, but of a strange, capricious architecture, carved and twisted in serpentine windings, heavy cornices, with ornaments of strange devices. The figures were represented in every attitude—standing, sitting, or reclining—with flowing, careless drapery; in some instances their feet seemed resting on the clouds or on a solid block of marble, but all this seemed forced, heavy, odd, and ungraceful.

The apartment where the marquis held festival, and invited the various lords to his splendid banquets several times during the year, bore in its encircling cornice the quarterings and devices of the noble families with whom his own had been allied by marriage; and here might be seen the escutcheons of all the noblest families of Piedmont and of Italy—those of the Marquises of Saluzzo, of Ceva, of Carretto, of Faussone, of Radicati, of Prié, of Scarampi di Villanova, of Prunei, of Santa Rosa, of Provana di Collegno, of Sabbione, of the Princes of Massarano, of San Marsano, of Valperga, who were of that branch who were the descendants of Arduino d'Ivrea, King of Italy. We, who come after the great European revolutions, cannot understand or feel, as did our fathers, their great and unsurpassed respect for lineage and the importance of great alliances; for what seems frivolous to our eyes was grave and serious in theirs. Their nobility they regarded as a gift from God, for which they

thanked him with fervent gratitude ; for high birth was to them a source of virtue, greatness, and courtesy.

Even the table of the marquis had preserved the ancient splendor. It was laden with basins and jugs of silver for the washing of the hands ; tankards, goblets, platters, and dishes of all sorts of massive gold and silver, carved, chased, and engraved by the illustrious pupils of Caradosi and Benvenuto Cellini ; and in the centre imposing statues of beautiful and graceful designs. The meats and various courses were of the severe simplicity of the old Italian kitchen ; French cooking was never permitted by the old marquis, who held to the food of his own country. Therefore upon his table appeared Monginevra goats, roasted whole and served in a bed of marjoram, mint, and rosemary, or the mountain lamb of Monte Cenisio, or the chamois of Monrosa. He enjoyed extremely the *zamponi* of Modena, the shoulder of San Secondo, the *salame* or sausage of Verona, the mutton of Vio, the juicy *bondiola* of Ferrara, accompanied with the usual vegetables, lentils, spinach, the pastes, sauces, or *risotto*, with the venison from Canarese, the buzzard from the marshes of Lomellina, ducks from the rivers of Vercellese, and water-fowl from the Bormida and Panaro. Our marquis was passionately fond of fish, and had served in magnificent silver dishes, bearing a lemon in its mouth, and covered with flowers, enormous trouts from Lake Maggiore, pikes from Ticino, carps from the Dora, sturgeons from the Po, the small trout from

the Stura, and the *ombre-chevalier* of the lakes of Monte Cenisio.

As to wines, this rigid Italian would not hear of Bordeaux, of Champagne, of Tokay, of Malaga, Alicante, or Madeira. He wished none other than his Barbera, very old Barolo, Monferrato, and the white wine of Asti, and accepted only as after-dinner wines those of Nice and Sardinia. He caused to be served the belletto of Varo, the Rossigno of Cimella, the Malvasia of Bosa, the Vernaccia of Campidano d'Oristana, the Monica, Nasco, and *canonao* of Campidano di Cagliari, vaunting them as far above the French, Spanish, and Hungarian wines.

Such were our Italians, born in the first quarter of the last century, who recalled the greatness, prowess, and valor of 1600—a period which, in spite of the pride and bravado of the Spanish nobility, preserved in other countries, especially Piedmont, the ancient noble simplicity.

But those born about the years 1740 and 1750 thought and acted far differently; they drank deeply, intoxicated themselves, as it were, with the subtle poison of Voltairean philosophy, which, having crossed the Alps, had inundated Italy, infecting, corrupting, and poisoning the air, and filling it with frivolity, errors, and unbelief. Then all was changed, and Italy became France. Nothing was good, rich, or elegant unless it was French. Every new custom of the court of Louis XV. was unexpectedly launched, as it were, in our midst, reigning imperiously and despotically over our

homes, our garments, and our customs. Hitherto the Italian language had been tending towards the Spanish, but all at once it grew so Frenchified that it became a horrible dialect, in which we might seek vainly for its ancient origin and the round, sonorous, light, and graceful character of our beautiful native tongue.

Our great-grandfathers, after having given to their wives a robe, consisting of a splendid piece of watered brocade, wrought with pretty designs of pearls, with clasps or buckles of emeralds or rubies—a garment which cost them some thousand crowns—were at least certain that it would last during their lives. The young men, on taking wives, gave them a sumptuous tunic of velvet or heavy satin, studded with clusters of precious stones worth a fortune; and these garments were worn only at great festivals or to go to court, and with this one outlay all was ended.

As soon as the country had become inundated with French fashions, these garments, the last vestige of national simplicity, were thrown aside, and our lords squandered their rich patrimonies in fooleries, overloading themselves for the most part with debt—debts which still remained when occurred the war of '96, which reduced the Italian nobility to an impoverished and miserable condition.

The castle of the Count d'Almavilla was therefore, as may be supposed from what we have said, the opposite of that of his father at San Roberto; for there all had been changed, and nothing remained of the ancient gravity and the old Italian

simplicity. Arms, tapestries, great tables, pillared and canopied beds, had been removed to garrets and lumber-rooms, to be replaced by entirely new furniture, resembling that of the Tuileries, Saint-Cloud, or Versailles. They had arranged a room at the castle resembling that of Queen Marie Antoinette, the chamber of the Dauphin, or that of Madame : the mirrors, the tables, the chairs, sofas, porcelains, sculptures, brackets, and even to the harps, lutes, and spinets, were in imitation, on the models of the Parisian Olympus ; and as then everything was in the odd, fantastic style called rococo, all these beautiful ornaments were in various and varied designs, in which they had exaggerated to an absurd degree the architectural or architectonic axiom : *The curving line is the source of all beauty and grace.* This is what gave us, towards the close of 1600, so many absurdities in sculpture, architecture, and ornamentation, which consisted entirely of rounded points and curves. The curved line, it is true, is productive of beauty ; but we must also remember that a principle, sound and just in itself, becomes, when carried to excess, false and ridiculous.

We have an instance of this in the contrary excess which, about the end of 1810, brought us, after the excavations in Pompeii and Herculaneum, the triumph of the straight line upon the ruins of the curved line, its rival ; the former gave to the eye an idea of the simple, neat, chaste, grave, and solid. From frescoes the new mania passed to painting and architecture, which became purely



Greek and Roman, and degenerated into paltriness, meanness, and poverty. Our great masters of the sixteenth century, Leon-Battista Alberti, Palladio, Bramante, Sammicheli, Sansovino, Vignola, and Scamozzi, mingling with admirable genius the two lines, united grace and dignity, and of that union they produced the beautiful, the majestic, the sumptuous and magnificent. But our poor imitators, always going to the wildest extremes, perceiving their unsuccessful exaggeration of the straight line, rushed back into the other excess of roundness and curves, so difficult is it for man to maintain a happy medium.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE COUNT D'ALMAVILLA.

As soon as the noble cavalcade had reached the esplanade of San Valentino, the young travellers, having dismounted, entered the church to hear Mass, which was to be said by Dean Gresti. It was followed by an excellent breakfast, after which the young ladies strolled about in the pine-forest, and the men walked about chatting gayly, or climbed the side of Prabubalo, which during the autumn months was the mountain hunting-lodge of the dean, who was a skilful huntsman and an ardent lover of the chase.

The Count d'Almavilla was delighted with the view of these charming valleys, and breathed with deep pleasure the pure, clear, bracing, and healthful air of these lofty heights. He was a tall, finely-formed man, like most of the Piedmontese, with a slight air of reserve about him, though his manners were affable and courteous; his thin, strongly-marked features, aquiline nose, and prominent and disdainful under-lip proclaimed him a man of violent and overbearing character; but the salient point in his countenance was the thick, overhang-

ing eyebrows coming close together, without the interval above the nose which should divide them—an evident sign of an odd and singular character that seldom denotes good and upright judgment.

That day the count wore the hunting costume which Peter the Great, Czar of Moscow, brought into fashion, and which he had copied from a portrait of that monarch in the castle of San Roberto.

An ancestor of the count was minister of legation from Savoy to the Hague when Peter Alexicowitz went to Saardam to learn navigation as a cabin-boy, and had frequent occasion to hold long and familiar interviews with the workman-prince on the wise government, internal and foreign, of the dukes of Savoy, on the Republic of Venice and the other principal features of Italian policy, and on the wars of Louis XIV. The czar took great pleasure in conversing with the Marquis di San Roberto, and, meeting him again at Vienna, where he was then ambassador, he presented him with a magnificent diamond, which descended from father to son, and passed to the count when he married. Count d'Almavilla always wore upon his finger the *solitaire* of Peter the Great.

The count had made his studies at the University of Turin, where, it is true, there were no longer the three proud *appellanti* whom King Amadeus had brought thither from Paris to read in that celebrated academy; but their pupils still were there, and, although restrained by the frequent appeals of Benedict XIV. in the course of their



public lessons, instilled into the minds of these young students the poison of doctrines hostile to the Church, which they called the Roman *Curia*, and the court of Rome. The young count was scarcely twenty years of age when his father, the Marquis di San Roberto, had him admitted among the diplomatic students of the embassy of Paris.

Woe to the young man who went to live in Paris amid the luxury, pomp, and licentiousness of the court of Louis XV. ! And the misfortune was greater when the new arrival was his own master, not very pious, young, rich, handsome, and accessible to all the temptations in which that Eden of France and of the world, as they called Paris, abounded. Voltaire was not yet enfeebled, and was still in the height of his most glorious triumph. The young d'Almavilla became an ardent admirer of that frivolous and impious genius, and his diplomatic studies were not so much on the history of treaties, of diplomacy, of conventions, of alliances, of ancient and modern leagues, as on "La Pucelle," the novels, history, and poetry of Voltaire, which he devoured night and day, admiring their strength, brilliancy, their witticisms and sophisms, and filling himself with the impiety which abounds in these obscene writings. Our young diplomat recited with Mademoiselle Mailly, who afterwards became the Duchess de Châteauroux, scenes from "Zaïre," "Zulime," "Alzire," "Mérope," and "Mahomet"; he became so infatuated with these tragedies that, not content with playing them in private theatres, he declaimed

them all day long, till he became the plague and torment of his friends and associates.

His ambassador had strictly forbidden him to see Voltaire, but he found a thousand means of evading the eyes of his Argus and paying frequent, clandestine visits to the old man. Voltaire received him with such kindness and affection that he easily allowed him to become his guide and Mentor. The young man's accomplices in these stolen visits were the Count d'Argenson and sometimes the Marchioness du Châtelet, to whose castle Voltaire frequently repaired to study with her the philosophy of Newton. This perfidious deceiver soon agitated, perverted, corrupted that young soul. He brought the count to be on terms of intimacy with the Encyclopedists, the associate of d'Alembert, Diderot, Fréret, Condorcet, Raynal, La Mettrie, and all the other infidels whom France honored with the name of philosophers.

Having learned that J. J. Rousseau, who was banished from the kingdom, had taken refuge in England, d'Almavilla thought nothing of hastening to London to offer to the citizens of Geneva his devotion, services, and admiration, loudly declaring himself a propagator of the doctrines of Emile, of the *Contrat Social*, and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. In London the young man fell into new snares: he became connected with Lord Bolingbroke, Tindall, Collins, Morgan, and Chubb—men who had declared open war on Christianity, and filled England and the world with their blasphemies. The young diplomat then uprooted in his heart the

little germ of religion which still lay dormant, gained admission among the Freethinkers, who recommended him to the Freemasons, by whom, on his return to France, he was received as a member, and he ended by becoming the most ardent and zealous promoter of Freemasonry in Piedmont.

Poor Italy, invaded in all parts by emissaries of infidelity, found the germs—or, to better express it, the authors—of corruption in several of her lords who squandered their wealth in procuring for themselves, by a thousand tortuous ways, the most infamous and irreligious books. In this terrible treachery were deeply concerned, if not the ambassadors of the Italian court, at least some of the secretaries or counsellors of the legation; the pupils, and even the ushers, became corrupted, so that, in making up parcels for the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be sent to the different countries, they slipped in clandestinely the worst and most infamous books published at Paris by Voltaire, Thiriot, d'Argental, Damilaville, d'Argens, Helvetius, Marmontel, and a hundred other infidel writers. The despatches having reached the minister, there was always beside him some employee, superior or subaltern, who secretly took these abominations from under the very eyes of the minister, and sent them, removing only the bribes, to their destination.

One day, when, by some chance, the ambassador with whom d'Almavilla was placed had occasion to visit a store-room in the embassy, he discovered, with great grief—for he was a good and virtuous

Christian—an immense collection of the works of Voltaire, particularly the “*Épître à Uranie*,” “*Nouvelles*,” the “*Essai sur les Mœurs et l’Esprit des Nations*,” the poem “*De la Loi Naturelle*,” the “*Tragédies*,” and a hundred other detestable productions of that perverter of Europe. The ambassador was much disturbed by it, but could not succeed in discovering by whom, nor for what purpose, had been amassed such a heap of obscene rubbish; and the worthy man never suspected that these books reached Turin under the holy seal of the cross of Savoy, and were quietly distributed in the palaces of many of the great, of the crown, and of the court, and among other noble ladies and gentlemen.

Venice, however, surpassed in this sort of frauds all the other Italian cities; and the mysterious deposits of Fusina and of Mestre disgorged every day or night thousands of examples. Several patricians had a hand in it; their villas of Mirra, of Dolo, and on the banks of the Brenta received enormous bales, which, being unloaded, were divided into numerous packages, which stuffed the cushions of their gondolas, filled the sterns and hatchways, and, under the livery of the gondoliers of the palace, were brought unperceived into the palaces of Canalazzo, Giudecca, and the canal of Regio, and in the other and more illustrious ones of Venice, whence they passed finally, to the ruin of faith and morals, into a hundred thousand hands; and impiety, not satisfied with all this, found starving translators who gave these

infamous productions to private presses, whence they were vomited in secret, that corruption might be brought to the level of all minds, even the lowest.

Milan was, however, well seasoned with it; the royal roads of the Alps not being yet in existence, the French, Swiss, and German merchandise was carried on the backs of mules. Now, the saddles of these mules, in place of being padded with horse-hair or wool, were stuffed with these impious works in pamphlet form. Here were also sent ostensibly beautiful volumes, embossed and finely bound, bearing the title and offering even the first pages of the "Confessions" of St. Augustine, and the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," and Gospels, which were nothing else than these vile productions, hypocritically disguised as good books, and were thus brought into Italy; the contrabandists introduced them, by roads which they alone knew, to Lusa, by Monte Cenisio; to Lake Maggiore, by Sempione; to the Lake of Como, by the canton of Ticino; besides those sent by sea to Venice, Ancona, Genoa, and Livorno. It was a curse. . . . Rome itself did not escape it.

Such was the state of Italy when Count d'Almavilla, who was then Secretary of Legation to the Hague, was recalled by his father, the Marquis di San Roberto, who wished him to marry, as he was his only son. Thinking that the marquis would leave a patrimony heavily burdened by enormous debts which had eaten everything up for a number of years—and he himself, in place of remedying



the former evil, increasing it by permitting things to go on, as did all these indolent lords, stewards, and secretaries—he set himself to seek out a rich dowry and a great heritage. By the management of some relatives they discovered and fixed upon a young girl belonging to a little provincial town, who was noble and very rich; she was suggested to the marquis. This young person had not, perhaps, all the quarterings of nobility corresponding to the arms of her house; and, though the proofs might be called in question by which the children should become *Militę di Giustizia* \* in the gallery of Malta, nevertheless her large dowry and the rich succession which was to come to her at her majority softened a little the marquis's indomitable pride of heraldry.

Virginia was then sixteen years old. She was beautiful, pious, modest, with a mild and amiable disposition, but timid and a little wild. She had been educated at Chambery, in the convent of the Ladies of St. Francis de Sales, called Salesians, who were always and everywhere recognized as the most skilful and holy educators of young Catholic girls. Virginia had received an education befitting a young lady of rank: she played very well upon the spinet, had learned to sing, embroidered beautifully by hand or with a frame, could deport herself with ease and grace, and, after leaving the convent, had been taught to dance by one of her aunts. She was an orphan, and had remained

\* Knights of Justice.



in the care of a maternal aunt, a pious and sensible woman, and under the guardianship of a paternal uncle, an odd, singular man, who gave himself up entirely to a mania for pretended antiquities that no one else could obtain, according to his idea, which he collected, and esteemed to be the most precious specimens of nature and art ; for the worthy man had never left his native town, and thought himself the sole possessor of such articles of *virtu*. In his apartments weré to be found in all directions goats' horns, stags' heads with their antlers, the stuffed skin of a large snake, a large rock of mountain crystal, eight or ten petrified fish from the mountains of Bolca, a collection of polished marbles and of marbles in the rough, with a written ticket bearing their name and species ; on the walls hung iron helmets, morions, head-pieces, and other ancient armor which he had bought very dear from some cheats, who had passed off this old iron ware for rare historic relics. This helmet had belonged to Conrad the Salic, that shield to Frederic Barbarossa ; that fragment of a lance was a portion of one used by Rodolph of Hapsburg ; that gauntlet had once been worn by Ethelred of England ; those spurs had been fastened to the heels of Charlemagne when he was crowned Emperor of the West at Rome. Some worthless coin had been sold to him as a medal of Cublaï, great Kahn of Tartary ; a piece of loadstone for a fragment of that portentous magnetic stone which sustained in mid-air Mahomet's arch in the mosque of Mecca ; an ugly ring for that of Æneas when he landed

near the mouth of the Tiber ; a cameo for the ring worn by Trajan when he led the Dacians and Sarmatians in triumph to victorious Rome.

This excellent knight believed in his treasures with such a lively faith that it could never be uprooted from his mind. He had golden cases, elegant little boxes, and the most beautiful glass cases imaginable for all these baubles, and not a day passed that he did not invite the notary, the doctor, the dean, and the syndic to dine with him, that he might show them his archæological treasures, accompanied by the most learned and eloquent dissertations in the world ; so that all these good people believed blindly that these wonders were far more astounding than all that was contained in the British Museum and those of Florence and Paris put together.

But on entering the picture gallery he respectfully uncovered his head, as though in a sanctuary, and spoke there of pictures and paintings in a manner which surpassed Borghini, Vasari, and Lanzi. All he had there were originals of the great masters. "This one, you must know, is a Titian ; that a Leonardo ; that Virginia Luino ; that Child a Pomerancio. But look at that Venetian ; do you not recognize a Giorgione ? That little cherub playing the lute is a miniature of Gian Bellini. Here is a Bronzino ; there a Correggio. Eh ! what large eyes, what a smile, what a part in the hair. . . . It is the perfect image of him ; I had it, by a fine chance, of a Jew, and did not pay dear for it either. The dolt did not appreciate it. One

day the guardian of the Borromeo Palace in Isola Beila, near Lake Maggiore, where there is a superb collection of pictures, came to see me. Scarcely had he entered when he cried out: 'There is a Correggio.' Imagine: he who dusts all those pictures every week of his life. A Correggio! I would not give it if they were to cover me with sequins! A Correggio! Why, it is a treasure! Some pretend that that Virgin is a Raphael, and a dean who was at Rome swore it to me. As to Paul Veroneses, Bassanis, Carraccis, Domenichinos, why, I have them by the dozen. My niece, Virginia, is fortunate. She will one day inherit all these marvels. In about a month she is going to marry the Count d'Almavilla—a boy, do you see, who could buy and sell us all. Fancy: he has spent several years in Paris, has been to London, Holland, and Germany. He is enchanted with all this, and ready to die of envy.'

It is easy to suppose that, before the good knight, the young man appeared to be astonished and delighted, and impudently mocked the old man by bringing him, from time to time, some relic for which he invented a history as he went along, and which the old knight swallowed eagerly and hastily transcribed. After his marriage with Virginia, the count, who was a gambler and spendthrift, whenever he had need of money brought to the knight one of those little mortuary lamps which are to be seen in old tombs, making him believe that it was an article of priceless value taken from the mausoleum of Porsenna, King of Etruria, or had been

found, still lighted, after two thousand years, in the sarcophagus of the African Scipio. The knight raised his eyebrows, rubbed his hands, bowed his head, and frisked round the room in delight. The young man took him by the hand, caressed him, and said, with one of his perfect Parisian smiles: "Then, dear uncle, lend me, I pray you, six thousand francs. I am going to make a splendid investment." And the poor dupe gave them, without suspecting that the preceding night these six thousand francs had been staked and lost at play.

No sooner had Virginia become Countess d'Almavilla than her husband, taking her aside, said:

"My wife, you now owe me obedience, according to your vow. You were educated by those foolish devotees of Salesians, who are ten centuries behind the age in a point of civilization. You must rise to the level of this century; understand, therefore, that I want no hypocrisy."

"What do you mean by hypocrisy?" asked Virginia modestly.

"I mean, madame, your daily Mass, which you have hitherto attended; I mean your habit of going every eight days, whispering and muttering, at the grating of a confessional; of having a monk at your heels (woe to him if he dares to come sneaking round the palace!); I mean, also, your frequent communions, your confraternities, your benedictions, and the rest. All these things are out of date for noble young ladies. Go thither once at Easter, since it is the custom, and that is enough."

Poor Virginia was at first dismayed by such language, but, taking courage, answered her husband :

“ Count, I supposed that, in loving, esteeming, and pleasing you in all the duties of a good wife, I was free to remain a Christian, and that I must still believe. I will not give you the least annoyance, sir, but I implore you, with clasped hands, that in what regards my salvation I may be free to do what I have always done.”

“ Hear the devotee, exclaiming like one possessed !” said the enraged count. “ Hear the headstrong, insistent woman ! I know not what prevents me from striking that hypocritical face with my fist. To be brief, on Sundays the chaplain will come and say Low Mass ; you shall have a little missal, which must suffice. I will not have in the house either crosses or medals, or ‘ Lives of the Saints ’ or of the Madonna ; if I catch you at novenas, woe to you !—leave them to devotees and hypocrites. I will give you beautiful books to read. You are an ignoramus, brought up in superstition ; and I will put it out of your head. This evening there will be the reception at the house of the English ambassador ; I wish you to appear the most elegant there. The Prince de Chablais will be there, and you will dance with him. Do not make a fool of me, or I swear . . .” And so saying, he turned on his heel, leaving poor Virginia almost heart-broken.

But true piety is strong, brave, and prudent. The Salesians of Chambery, and even Virginia’s



aunt, had fortified her young soul against unforeseen assaults. As soon as she was alone Virginia fell upon her knees, asking of God grace to overcome these trials ; then calling her maid, who was a discreet, well-brought-up, and devoted girl, she said to her :

“ Julie, bring all the books of piety which are in my desk up to the wardrobe-room ; hide them from the inquisitive eyes of my waiting-women, and then come down and dress me. There is a reception and ball this evening.”

Somewhat late in the evening Virginia was ready. She was dressed in a wonderful profusion of drapery, trimming, and ornaments. She wore her hair in a style just fresh from Paris, called the *Etiotes*, after Madame de Pompadour, who was still Madame d’Etiotes. Virginia’s personal beauty, the graceful arrangement of her hair, and elegance of her dress, might easily entitle her to be the queen of the ball.

Proud and happy to please her Edward, the young wife awaited him impatiently. Hearing his step in the ante-chamber, she ran forward to meet him, joyous, and radiant as a star. But this cruel knight, seeing her thus elegantly but decently and modestly arrayed, rushed over to her and tore off the rich Flanders point which covered her neck, crying :

“ What does this mean, coming before me dressed like the Madonna of Loretto ? Oh ! I understand ; that fool of a Julie will receive my exact orders. Madonnas are well enough in church : women of the world go to balls. Come, call Julie.”



Virginia, pale and trembling, rang the bell, and d'Almavilla made her dress his wife like a Psyche. The modest lady felt her face grow crimson, and resolutely refused to go to the ball in this indecent, low-cut dress. The brutal husband, flying into a terrible rage at her words, struck his wife in the face, pulled her hair, and tore the necklace from around her neck, then threw her with a violent jerk upon a sofa. The count went alone to the ball, in sullen and furious mood, but, putting a good face on the matter, declared that Madame d'Almavilla had been taken with a violent headache, which had deprived her of the pleasure she had anticipated at this delightful reception. The count then proceeded, according to the detestable custom of those times, to choose a married lady, to whom he devoted himself.

The unfortunate Virginia passed her sorrowful days, ill-treated by her infidel husband, and bravely defying him by the modesty of her toiles, as well as by her firm refusal to accept a *chevalier servant* ; \* sometimes, too, at rare intervals, making stolen visits to the church. But her tyrant cruelly oppressed her.

The pious young wife opened her heart to the Princess of Cisterna, with whom she had been brought up in Savoy. She was a relative of San Roberto, and was precisely the sister of the lady on whom d'Almavilla wished to bestow his attentions, for which reason the tyrant permitted his wife to

\* Attending knight or lover.

see and converse with her alone. This princess was as beautiful and charming as could be desired; she had had the good fortune to marry a good Christian husband, who left her free to follow her pious practices. And what did the two friends do? True virtue knows how to make a way out of the most intricate labyrinths, and the two fair ladies agreed between themselves to visit each other frequently in the mornings, breakfast with each other, and work together, to all of which d'Almavilla consented graciously, proud of this illustrious friend.

But the blockhead did not suspect that the Princess Cisterna brought thither by a secret stairs a venerable Father Carmelite of St. Teresa, who, repairing to the chapel, heard Virginia's confession, said Mass, and fortified her with the Bread of Angels, which reanimated her and gave her courage to sustain the continual and constantly-recurring contests with her tiger of a husband. Father Bonaventura di Santa Maria was full of the spirit of St. Teresa, which he communicated and transfused, strong and living, into Virginia's heart, raising her thus to the sublime height of that Seraph of love—*Aut pati aut mori*.\* And great was Virginia's need of it. This heroine of patience suffered so cruelly from the impious caprices of her husband that it would have seemed impossible that, without a miracle, a woman's heart was strong enough to sustain herself so energetically and perseveringly in the way of salvation.

\* To suffer or to die.

The count, fearing that his wife might find some means of receiving Communion, made her take her coffee in bed every morning ; but Virginia, feigning illness, in which she was often seconded by the physician, escaped this, and, with her friend, used a thousand harmless subterfuges in order to communicate every week without letting her husband have the least suspicion of it. Meanwhile, he observed that one morning Virginia, in receiving some old ladies and gentlemen, relatives or old friends of the house of San Roberto, she wore a chemisette high to the throat, called at first the Maintenon, afterwards the Marie-Clotilde ; for the pious and modest Queen of Sardinia had adopted it. That sufficed to induce him, on returning from his ride or a drive in his phaeton on the ramparts of the city, to bring hence a number of unprincipled young Voltaireans, sending her word by his secretary to remove that *bib* from around her neck ; and as the modest young wife had sought to replace the proscribed chemisette in a dozen graceful and modest ways, and thus cover her neck and shoulders, the wretch tore them off her in presence of his associates, leaving her thus uncovered to their view.

I will not mention the coarse language which they held at the table to make the countess blush ; their attempts, while the coffee was being served, to force her to accept a *chevalier servante*. But the most trying time for Virginia was the evening when her husband assisted at her toilet, and commanded Julie to arrange her corsage as he wished.

She felt as if she would die of shame when her husband compelled her, with her neck uncovered, to ride with him in his open carriage. She was in torture at the café, taking sherbet, where her husband seemed to take great delight in showing her off, as it were. She was surrounded by numerous gallants, and found herself face to face with the most worldly women of the town, many of them indecently clad. The poor woman was much disturbed, and her heart failed her.

The combat did not end here. The wretch had resolved to pervert this beautiful soul. We have seen how Virginia was forced to hide the books which might strengthen her in piety, in modes y, and the fear of God ; but she went up to the clothes room every day, and passed a quarter of an hour in reading and meditation. Julie had procured her some little old volumes, very small in size, which Virginia read in secret, kept in her muff in winter, and hid at the slightest noise, fearing lest her husband should discover them. In the midst of all this strife the soul of the young wife expanded ; she sought by the charm of her manners, the serenity of her face, the affability of her speech, and by silence, meekness, and gentleness, to conquer herself and her inveterate persecutor. But, like all men without religion, he stifled within him every sentiment of delicacy and every feeling of the heart ; brutal and discourteous, he insulted her in words, and when in anger beat her as he would a rude servant, so that Julie was obliged to rescue her from his hands.

His greatest cause for rage was her courageous and constant refusal to read the impious and obscene books he brought her. She began to read them, but soon flung them far from her in horror and disgust; then came the exclamations, reproaches, and fury of her husband, who began to read them aloud, commenting on them as he went. At times the poor child threw herself at his feet, embracing them, and beseeching and imploring him to have pity on her; but the ruffian spurned her, and, casting her brutally aside, left her for dead on the floor.\*

\* It may not be out of place to inform our readers that these facts are strictly true, and that what was done by Voltaireans of the last century closely resembles what is done by infidel husbands in our own day. More than one unfortunate Italian wife will recognize her own story in these pages. These secret martyrs endure their torments in silence. Many of these heroic women bear their heavy domestic burden with such noble and courageous dissimulation, when in public, that they are regarded as the happiest of wives of these rich lords; while in secret they are but the sad and gentle victims of the impiety and strange caprices of their cruel and unmanly husbands.







## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FIRST-BORN.

AS soon as the Marquis di San Roberto learned that there was a prospect of his daughter-in-law giving them an heir to perpetuate the noble tree of his ancient line, he set out from San Roberto, in great delight, to pay her a visit. The good Virginia, who was in all respects a charming and affectionate creature, received him with so much grace, and loaded him with so many gentle caresses, that the old man wept with joyful emotion ; but when they began to speak of the reason of his journey, Virginia soon understood that her father-in-law's favor was conditional, for he talked unceasingly of, and seemed to desire above all things, the birth of a son.

Virginia timidly replied that she would be glad to give him pleasure, but that no one could venture to oppose the will of God. . . . But the old man flared up at the very doubt that the expected child might be a girl, and said to her haughtily and angrily :

“Virginia, if it is not a boy I will never see you again.”

The poor woman, deeply wounded by these rude



words, was forced to bear this pain in addition to that inflicted by her husband, and found her only refuge in God.

The old marquis, in hopes of speedily having a grandson, was almost beside himself, and began to make grand and magnificent preparations. He had already made overtures to the king, asking him to hold the heir of his name at the baptismal font, and the king had graciously consented to become its godfather. Virginia was to receive three hundred doubloons of Savoy, a large golden cup, carved and inlaid by the Genoese goldsmith, bearing on the lid a ring surmounted by a diamond of the purest water ; at the two handles of this cup were two rubies of marvellous lustre ; besides a necklace of large white pearls, and an emerald clasp, with many other beautiful and costly articles.

He gave orders to all his stewards and tenants that, at the very first news of the birth of an heir, all the bells were to be rung ; all the pastors and chaplains were to intone the *Te Deum* ; on all the towers of the castle fifty cannon shots were to be discharged, and all the flags unfurled for a week. Open table was to be held for three days to all his vassals, where they were to be served with beef, roast mutton, sausages, cheese, bread, and wine in abundance ; a sack of wheat and half a cask of wine were to be distributed to all his foresters, gamekeepers, and farmers. But if, unfortunately, the birth of a girl should be announced, any signs of rejoicing would be severely punished.

The old marquis was so possessed with this rage for male children that one day he sent word to the rector of the college for young noblemen at Turin, whose villa was situated near his castle of San Roberto, that he wished all the children of his relatives and friends who were then at the college to come and dine with him. The rector could not, of course, refuse ; and the youngsters were received with ringing of bells and firing of musketry. But after dinner, just when it was time for the children to return, down came a terrible deluge. The marquis, being a rigid, punctilious observer of forms, sent one of his gamekeepers on horseback, with a pouch slung over his shoulder, to the rector's villa. Having been introduced to the rector's presence, the messenger gave him a large document. The despatch opened, the rector found a letter stamped with three large waxen seals—that of the marquis, the chaplain, and the steward of the castle—and read :

“MOST REV. RECTOR :

“It is raining in torrents. I have here a dozen of your young students. Put yourself in my place. If they were merely twelve girls, it would be no great harm if they took a good bath ; but twelve boys, the pillars of the first families in the kingdom . . . No, certainly. . . . To-morrow I will bring them back myself. For to-night, have no anxiety ; they will be well lodged and well cared for.”

And so it was. Next morning the marquis brought back the “twelve pillars” in three car-

riages, and delivered them to the rector, relating all the incidents of the journey as though he were describing the march of an army whose way was full of the pitfalls and snares of an enemy.

Who can tell the terror which seized upon Virginia's soul? On one hand the old man, who wished for a boy *or death*; on the other an infidel husband, who would not have any sacraments, as she had understood from broken words which he in his anger he had let drop; and in this she resolved to defeat him, cost what it might. Therefore, when the critical time approached, she secretly called the midwife and explained to her:

“As soon as the child is born, you must, at all hazards, baptize it before my eyes; and remember, there will be no time to lose.”

The midwife promised, and Virginia henceforth thought only of recommending herself to God and making her preparations. God willed that she gave birth to a girl, which was a great disappointment to the whole household. As for the marquis, he had his horses harnessed, and set out at once for San Roberto, without seeing either mother or child. He remained obstinately angry, and for a long time would not enter his son's house. This enraged the count beyond measure; but what made him still more furious was that when, going in to his wife, he said:

“You know it was agreed that, if the child should be a girl, we would wait for the arrival of my aunt Livia, and have the ceremony of baptism performed in our chapel of Almavilla. Give me

the child, that, meantime, I may baptize her privately. . . .”

His wife answered :

“ Dear Edward, the poor little creature caused us so much anxiety that the midwife, fearing the slightest delay, baptized her when she was washing her.”

The impious husband, seeing his plans frustrated by his prudent wife, flew into such a rage that the waiting-women and his secretary ran forward to calm him and induce him to leave the room, where his poor wife was trembling from head to foot.

The count's intention had been to mock the Church, to deceive his wife and the world in general, by baptizing the child, in presence of the midwife and two other witnesses, according to the Catholic rite ; but, in place of the clear, pure water which the Church prescribes, he had conceived the horrible idea of mingling in the vessel of water which he had prepared some distilled rose-water, so that his daughter would not be baptized at all, though having received all the outward forms of baptism.

The count, seeing that he could not alter what was inevitable, determined to torment and afflict his wife by every means in his power. At that time very few noble ladies nursed their children, but many of them had the nurse or foster-mother in the house, where they could frequently see the child. The count began by relentlessly sending the nurse from the house with the child, and did not permit Virginia to see her more than once a

year. This was a bitter pang to the mother, deprived of even the consolation of embracing her daughter. Her life was one great sorrow; she passed her solitary days longing for her child, or enduring the continued insults of her husband, who would not even permit her to pour out her sorrows in the chapel.

But the Princess Cisterna, at her earnest entreaty, having caused her husband to invite the count to a hunting-party, secretly brought her a priest, and Virginia had the happiness of receiving the sacerdotal benediction; and as, in this numerous household, the good priest knew full well that among the good old servants there were some of the count's retainers who were of suspicious character, therefore he entered under pretext of a visit to an old waiting-woman who was ill, and, passing through the clothes-room, was brought to Virginia, then returned and passed out by the same way.

Meanwhile, the count was considering how he could educate his daughter Lauretta after the fashion of "Emile" and the "Nouvelle Héloïse." The little girl was now four years old. He would not permit her to see her mother, fearing that she might instil into that young soul the germs of faith and fear of God; he wished to bring her up without the slightest religious bias, so that, when about eighteen years of age, she might be free, according to the doctrine of Rousseau, to choose a religion to her taste. He therefore wrote to Paris, to a Voltairean friend of his, requesting him to send a young governess, highly accomplished in music,



singing, and history, who knew English, and had manners suitable to bring up a young girl of rank according to the customs and ideas of the great lords of that day.

His wish was gratified. Mlle. Elvire had been educated at the Institut Philanthropique of Paris, founded by the Marquis d'Argental, under the auspices of Mme. Dubarry, where no priest was ever permitted to enter, and it was forbidden to mention the name of God or the saints. All the works of the masters of iniquity were here admitted. The young pupils left this establishment rich in all outward advantages, charming and graceful, but their attractions were merely those which fascinated and ruined all who understood them not or wilfully rushed into danger.

From this institution came forth all those sirens who, under the title of duchess, marchioness, baroness, or the natural daughters of kings and princes, made their way at that time into all the great capitals of Europe, to allure real dukes, real marquises, and even real princes, whom they led into Freemasonry and infidelity. Many of them succeeded in gaining entrance to noble families, especially in Italy, to corrupt the faith in the tender and virginal souls of the young Italian ladies; and this was done so skilfully that too often it was unperceived by the pious mothers till it was, alas! too late.

Mlle. Elvire, in this instance, was not obliged to conceal her real sentiments; for, immediately upon her arrival at Turin, the education of the unfortu-



nate Lauretta was confided to her, with strict injunctions from the count to avoid all mention of religion ; he had, at the same time, forbidden the countess to see her child under pain of removing her altogether from her sight. Poor Virginia was almost heartbroken ; for she had quickly perceived the impiety of the governess by her hard, brazen face, as well as by her conversation when at table. She bravely held her place among the count's guests, who scoffed at all religion, and drew from Elvire opinions which showed her already advanced in cynicism and unbelief. Besides, Julie reported to her mistress the bearing of the governess towards her pupil ; the stories and novels which she related to her, the pictures she showed her, the freedom with which she spoke before her, and the whims and caprices which she permitted in the child. She told her that Elvire did not teach the little one her prayers nor her catechism ; that she did not wish Lauretta to have holy water at her bedside, and took away from her all pious pictures, even that of the Madonna. The worthy Julie, when putting the child to bed and tucking the clothes around her, always signed her forehead with a cross ; but perceiving this one evening, Elvire overwhelmed her with abuse, saying that her blessing was not required ; that she wished to act the devotee, the canting hypocrite ; that she would tell the count, and woe to her if she repeated such an act ; that religion was of the heart, and not in these old-womanish superstitions.

All these things were mortal wounds to poor

Virginia's heart, and she saw no remedy. In the morning, when the governess brought the child for its mother's kiss, Edward was there on guard like a sentinel; and the poor mother had frequent quarrels, because she sometimes said to her daughter: "Did you say your prayers, Laretta? Fear God, my child, and love the Blessed Virgin. . . ."

When this occurred, she was deprived for days and days of the sight of her child, who was growing up like an animal, without piety or religion, left to her own caprices, haughty, headstrong, violent, disobedient, and heartless. If her waiting-maids ventured to offer a respectful remonstrance, she made faces at them, mocked them, spit in their faces, kicked them, beat and even scratched them. She complained of them to her governess, using little, malicious calumnies.

"Nanna said this to me . . . or did that. Gegia struck me; she pinched my neck and pulled my hair in combing it. Lena called you names—said you were a gypsy, a French beggar, and that you were as ugly as a witch."

Hence more than one of these poor girls, who were old servants of the house, were fearfully ill-treated and abused by Elvire, who would hear neither excuses, nor proofs, nor defence, saying: "That innocent child would not lie, and the rest of you are impudent liars." Some were even dismissed from the house and reduced to utter destitution.

By the time Laretta had reached and passed her sixteenth year—without ever having read a sin-

gle book on religion or piety ; without having ever been told of the love of Jesus Christ for men whom he redeemed from sin and eternal damnation by the sacrifice of his most precious Blood ; without any feeling of devotion to the Mother of God, our mother and advocate, being awakened in her heart ; without ever having cleansed her soul in the Sacrament of Penance, or nourished it with the Bread of Angels—she possessed no more of the charming qualities which adorn a young girl than if she had been a monkey or an ourang-outang.

Will you exclaim against this exaggeration, dear reader ? Will you condemn the comparison, when you remember that this poor young girl was brought up in the doctrines of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and nourished with the blasphemous subtleties of Voltaire, who speaks of unlimited liberty ; of the mind being naturally savage ; of the rights of man ; of the inutility of external culture ; of the trickery and fanaticism of the priests ; of the grasping avarice of monks ; of the natural necessity to satisfy all internal appetites by sloth, luxury, gluttony, and the rest, . . . in a word, that all the thoughts and the actions of man, and his only aim on earth, is comprised in the epicurean axiom :

Oh legge aurea felice !  
Se piace, ei lice,\*

—truly, the law of hogs, who constantly wallow in filth, and plunge their snouts into the trough of their sty, . . . because *it is their pleasure*.

\* O happy, delightful law,  
To please one's self in all things !

Do you now understand why I described the unfortunate Laretta as being brought up like a brute ?

As the young girl would not have understood the "Emile," the "Contrat Social," the subtleties of Helvetius, or the gloomy doctrines of Hobbes, the crafty Elvire made her read these same doctrines, colored, refined, depicted in glowing tints, animated and intensified, in the novels and romances of Voltaire or Marmontel, in some articles in the Encyclopædia, and passages from American history by Raynal. The worthy teacher embellished her reading by comments, and arrayed these views in such a seductive and attractive but insidious light that Laretta was soon completely imbued with her father's ideas. But that rash and impious man soon repented of his work and tore his hair when it was too late.

The young girl rushed so blindly into all sorts of evil that it was impossible to recall her to any semblance of right. Her father at length became annoyed and disgusted, and dared not bring his daughter into the society of respectable people, nor even among his nearest kindred, who called him a fool—told him he had got what he deserved ; that the fruit corresponded to the seed ; that if these sour and bitter fruits set his teeth on edge, he had but himself to blame ; and Edward was enraged, because he was forced to agree with them, and repented of his error.

And when the countess, seven years after the birth of Laretta, made him the father of twins, a

boy and girl, he was forced to leave to their mother the first part of Ubaldo's education, and the entire control of Irene, his twin sister. As for Laretta, there was no longer any good to be expected from her ; for her father persisted in leaving her under Elvire's care, while, if she had been taken from her, even at thirteen or fourteen years of age, she might, through maternal care, have been recalled to the path of Christian virtue.

Laretta grew in years and in evil inclinations ; satisfying all her desires, gratifying all her whims, and yielding to all her wicked instincts. She was proud, violent, almost savage, in the family circle, rude, disdainful, and uncultivated with her relatives and friends, who avoided her with disgust as one would avoid anything strange and unnatural. She passed all her days alone, occupied in reading impious and pernicious novels, to which she even devoted a great part of her nights ; then she appeared next morning with aching head, tired eyes, burning cheeks, and agitated mind. She disliked needle-work or household duties to such a degree that when, being grown up, she was obliged to spend an hour thus employed in her mother's apartments, she was on thorns. Returning to her room, her chief amusement was in stuffing birds, impaling butterflies and insects, collecting nests, classing shells, forming herbariums, and cultivating all sorts of flowers.

All these things are undoubtedly very good in themselves ; but infidels, who spoil everything, have also corrupted the love of natural history, to



which they devote themselves, without ever raising a thought to God, who created all things for the necessities, pleasures, and edification of man. Instead of using them as a recreation, these senseless beings give them the place of God the Creator, and make them the object of their felicity; for the human heart, created to love, and unable to dispense with it, in place of the love of things eternal, attaches itself to creatures, and makes them its idols and its last end. Reader, have you remarked that men who do not love God are strongly attached to trifles, with which they hate to part?—one adores his dog, another a parrot or white mouse, a squirrel or a bird; and, with wonderful blindness, these people make a god of the most disgusting beast. In this women surpass us, because they feel more keenly than men. Show me a woman without religion, and I will point out how she makes herself ridiculous over some animal, giving it the place of any other love. These books of Voltairean philosophy carry the study of natural history to extremes, and recommend it to their disciples, because their unsatisfied hearts torment them unceasingly, and they seek to fill the void as best they may. Unwilling to look upwards, they cast their affections on beasts, hoping thus to satisfy and occupy their restless minds, as a sick man drinks opium to make him sleep and alleviate with dreams of health the feverish pain of his illness; for in these dreams he is strong and well, he goes, he comes, he loves, he is loved, he is happy in all that surrounds him.



The sectarians of our day have gone even further, and placed their affections in the love of hatred, vengeance, strife, and bloodshed.





## CHAPTER V.

### LIDA.

LAURETTA'S mother was deeply afflicted by the strange deportment of her daughter, and sought to discover means by which she might succeed in combating her evil inclinations. Lauretta having finished her education, the count graciously dismissed Elvire, after having paid her generously, although he was far from being content with the result of her training—as if he had not himself been its first and principal cause, not only by the choice of such an instructress, but also by the pains he had taken to remove his daughter from the salutary and Christian influence of the pious Virginia. But the latter, whose heart was wrung with anguish, asked of God an inspiration which might heal the infirm soul of her daughter, that her husband might not have an opportunity of opposing her plans; and wishing, at the same time, to spare Lauretta the severity of sermons from a priest or some relative, she judged it best to seek for her a friend who would be patient, amiable, discreet, and pious enough to attempt the difficult task of recalling to the fold this poor soul, the unfortunate victim

of paternal impiety. And God heard her when she least expected it. There was a sergeant who had served under the Marquis di San Roberto, and fought bravely and faithfully, so that he had been promoted from grade to grade, till he reached that of colonel, and was brought to the court as instructor to the young men who composed the companies of the guard of honor. The colonel, who had served under the old marquis, and to whom he owed his advancement, regarded him with heartfelt gratitude and devotion, and frequently went to visit him.

When he was a captain, he had married an excellent young girl, the daughter of a rich merchant of Dora Grossa Street. Just one year before the birth of Lauretta the captain had a daughter. Lida—for so she was called—had grown up to be a charming young girl, as virtuous as she was pretty—in a word, a thoroughly accomplished creature. Every one loved her. The young girl sometimes accompanied the colonel when he came to pay a visit to Count d'Almavilla to enquire about the marquis. Virginia had remarked her, and found her on acquaintance extremely pleasing. The countess then thought of soliciting her friendship for her daughter, who, happily, found her quite to her taste.

Lida was a good musician, spoke French with perfect fluency, was well read in ancient and modern history, took great pleasure in natural studies, but merely with the design, which is proper for all well-brought-up young persons, of expanding her

mind rather than of passing for a learned woman. As soon as the countess conceived the idea of bringing Lida to be the friend and companion of her daughter, the gentle Lida showed much pleasure at the prospect of such an intimacy, which also rejoiced the two fathers ; but Lida soon discovered that she had great need of patience in her intercourse with a friend who neither practised nor could understand virtues which were hitherto unknown to her. Nevertheless, she managed to win her way so skilfully and patiently to that almost savage heart that she succeeded at first in modifying Laretta's manners and conversation, and smoothing away some of her eccentricity, or overcoming those caprices which were totally unsuitable to a young girl of high rank ; but, for a time at least, she utterly failed in her attempts to awake in her heart any sentiments of piety. Lida devoted herself to this good work, thinking that even the smallest point won in this hard and obdurate nature was a great gain.

Laretta loved Lida for her extraordinary amiability, great good sense, and judgment, added to a loyal straightforwardness of conduct which could not fail to win the most rebellious hearts. One day, as they were walking together by a stream which ran near the castle, Laretta said to her friend :

“ Dear Lida, from what I see you are too distant ; your reserve will cause you to lose a fortune which is ready to fall at your feet. Have you not observed that the son of the French ambassador

loves you ardently, that he longs to see you and obtain one smile from you, or even a pleasant glance? Do you not notice that when, towards evening, we are on the little balcony of camellias, watering the flowers, the handsome Albert never fails to pass in hopes of seeing you? If we drive to the Valentino, we always meet him on horseback, passing and repassing us, making his horse prance around us, as if to say: 'Ah! raise your eyes and look at me'; and you appear as if Albert were the old general who tries to act the youthful gallant in his attentions to us. You look anywhere but at him, and seem to take delight in tormenting such a charming admirer, who does one's heart good to look at him. At the play he never takes his eyes from your face; at Mass at St. Charles's he is always there with the duchess, his mother; he watches you, and when we leave the church is awaiting you without. Now that we are here, he comes visiting papa with a thousand protestations of friendship, and seems positively unable to mount his horse and ride away; and if we are in the garden, he wanders round, content to see us and get even one word; . . . and you act towards him as if you were a queen."

"As if I was a poor commoner in presence of a duke, you mean, for I do not forget my insignificance before his greatness; . . . and if I should unfortunately be induced to forget it, a thousand circumstances would recall me to my humble condition and the shame of having forgotten it. It is true I perceived—for, of course, I am not blind—



Albert's infatuation ; and I must tell you he has given me more proofs of his love than you are aware. He persecutes me with notes, which he sends by the nurse or by my father's orderly ; I have even found them in my work-basket, in my dressing-case, in my music-books, and even in my prayer-book."

"And did you answer him ?"

"Could you believe I would do so, Lauretta ? I would consider that I had failed in self-respect had I done so, and would therefore die of shame. On the contrary, I scolded the nurse and the orderly, so that they dared not bring them again ; and that is why I find them hidden everywhere. Then I told my mother, and gave them to her to read."

"But you are a perfect fool, Lida. To your mother ! Why, what prudery ! Do you think your mother, when receiving attentions from your father, would show his letters to your grandmother ? . . . Nonsense ! you are silly."

"She did not show them, because my father did not write to her ; but before making known his love to her he obtained their permission to urge his suit."

"Schoolboy love, my dear ; tales of the Middle Ages ; only the nonsense of those Salesians ; peasant love—modern philosophy has done away with all these errors. If, indeed, our heart is free in all other actions, how much more so in that of marriage, and is not, therefore, dependent on the pleasure of our parents. As for me, in such a case I would only consult my own taste. . . .

But, by the way, what did your mother say to Albert's letters?"

"She said very wise'y that he could not be in earnest in his suit, and that, for my part, I should not for a moment entertain an idea of it."

"Now you see how our mothers endeavor to enslave us, restrict our liberty, and interfere with our good fortune. So you see how mistaken was your judgment. You might become a duchess, rise to a high station, and rule over Albert's immense possessions, dwell in one of the noblest palaces in the Faubourg St. Germain at Paris, lead a delightful life, appear like a queen, with your carriages, pages, and servants—and your mother would stand in the way of all this. O poor fool that you are! let her talk as she likes, but do you accept a love which is in all things so brilliant and desirable."

"I would be indeed silly and stupid if I allowed myself to be caught by the glittering bait of these imaginary pleasures, which are like scenes at a theatre; though I be but the child of humble people, God has given me light to see that, even should I really marry Albert, such a union would be a great misfortune to me, and I would be the cause of my own unhappiness. If a man be ennobled by a woman, it may pass; . . . but that a woman should hope to become noble by marrying a great lord, . . . it is folly even to think of such a thing. A noble lady has such natural grace, is so perfectly at home anywhere, and casts such a lustre on her husband, that, unless he were extremely

vulgar, he would be recognized, at least, by men with whom he was brought into contact. On the other hand, a woman of humble origin who marries a man of high birth takes up, poor woman, a heavy cross which neither wealth, high rank, her husband's titles, nor her own personal beauty and attractions can suffice to lighten—a cross which, if she has a heart, will become so heavy as almost to crush her beneath its weight."

"I can scarcely understand you; you speak a jargon which is unintelligible to me. Where do you see such great evils? If you marry Albert, you become a duchess; you will be called Your Excellency on every side; you will appear in brilliant toilets on the public promenade at the Champs Elysées, and will have the place of honor at state dinners; you will have a box at every theatre; you will hold court in your own palace; and people will esteem themselves fortunate when they are permitted even to admire your state."

"Ah! Lauretta, happiness does not consist in these trifles; if we penetrate beyond the golden wall, we may find serpents, scorpions, and odious vipers. If I married Albert, I would make him the wonder of Paris and all the courts where his father is known. I need not speak of the anger of his parents, the displeasure of his friends, the jeers of his enemies, the ridicule with which I should have overwhelmed him, and the irretrievable mistake of which I should have been the cause, and which would eventually cause me to lose his affection. He loves me ardently just now; but this

first fervor once passed, as it always does pass, he would regret having married me. After his fatal error in making such a *mésalliance*, he could neither present me at court, at the receptions of the nobility, nor gain me admission to the tables of the ambassadors, or to the balls and festivities of princes; and all this would soon become insupportable to him."

"You look on the dark side of everything, Lida. Why do you suppose that your husband could not introduce you to the society of the nobility? Would you not be as much a duchess as any other? Your beauty, grace, and charming manners will conciliate the affection and favor of the great ladies of Paris."

"The favor of some kind dowager, possibly, but never affection or familiarity. If I were a duchess, and you yourself met me at a ball, believe me, Lauretta, you would not condescend to honor me with a glance."

"Then you think me an out-and-out aristocrat? We overlook all such childish nonsense nowadays. Liberty, equality! We are all made of the same flesh and blood. You see I have chosen you for a friend."

"No, Lauretta, no. This equality may exist in words, but not in actions; and at a reception even where all were imbued with these philosophical ideas, should I approach one of them, the fine lady would draw away her dress, as if afraid I might soil it, or put on a supercilious expression, elevating her nose, lest the plebeian odor should offend her nostrils. I would stand there, rooted to the spot, as if turned

into stone, to Albert's great annoyance, as you may readily imagine; but it would be still worse if one of these ladies should see fit to advance and offer me her protection, regarding me with an eye of compassion, which would say plainly to others: 'Poor woman! one cannot help being sorry for her. Whence did she come? Her place is not here.' Therefore, my dear Laretta, leave me in my humble station, where, if it please God, I will marry a man in my own rank, who will never be ashamed of me."

Such was Lida—so prudent and sensible that to this chimera of Laretta's she responded with a judgment, wisdom, and discretion worthy of one much more fully conversant with the ways of the world. Yet, good and opposed to Laretta's nature as she was, the latter hated to be away from her, and never suffered her out of her sight. This is undoubtedly strange; but such examples are often seen of this mutual attraction in two persons entirely opposed to each other in character and disposition.

It chanced, therefore, that when, in the spring of 1792, the Count d'Almavilla wished to undertake a journey accompanied by Laretta, she at once decided that Lida should go with them. The count was delighted; for his daughter would thus have the treasure of a good companion. Virginia was, in turn, delighted, because their departure left her alone with her twins, Ubaldo and Irene, who were beginning to grow up; being delivered for so many months from the double infliction of her



husband and daughter, and free to transfuse the sweet odor of the Lord into these virgin souls.

Count d'Almavilla was, as I have already said, received and fêted at San Valentino by the noble relatives and friends of Giuseppe Pizzini d'Hochenbrunn; whilst they continued their walk to Prabubalo, the young ladies who accompanied Lauretta strolled on in the direction of the chaplain's house, chatting gayly, with that unconstrained freedom which is always admissible in the country. The windows of the chaplain's parlor opened directly upon the rocks in the valley of Fusi, and to the left could be seen a projection which seemed as it were only hanging to the rock, like the barbican of a ruined fortification in some ancient castle. Lauretta, turning to Fanny d'Hochenbrunn, said :

“ It seems to me that behind that little peak which juts from the mountain there must be a narrow path ; would it be possible to ascend that height ? Where does that road lead ? ”

“ Oh ! yes ; it would be possible. The mountaineers of these parts climb up thither, and that road leads to a broad, level plain, which is called Pianezzuolo, from which they pass on to the woods of Pozzo. Up there is the castle of Giovanni Taddei, one of the young men of our set.” And Fanny flushed ; for she loved this young man, who soon after became her husband. She continued :

“ But I must tell you, Lauretta, that that little road has been called by the wood-cutters of the valley the *Devil's Pathway*, because it is so narrow, rugged, and slippery ; the goats can scarcely

keep their footing on it ; and yet—would you believe it ?—every Sunday all the mountaineers from Pianezzuolo descend and reascend it to hear Mass at San Valentino.”

Lauretta was sitting at the window, and, while Lida and the other young girls were busy examining some wild flowers of the forest which they had culled, was seized with one of the inexplicable whims which often took possession of her mind, and, rising suddenly, left the room unperceived, went out into the fields, and calling a little peasant girl about twelve years of age, who had come out of a laborer's hut, asked her :

“ Will you take me to the *Devil's Pathway* ? ”

“ Willingly,” answered the active little one, who had climbed the rugged height a hundred times, and even the very evening before to see if the little blackbirds which she had seen in the nest had begun to put forth any feathers.

“ Go first.” said Lauretta.

And the child went on.

When they had reached the valley, the little villager said :

“ Beautiful lady, your dress is too long. You will have trouble in climbing, for the path is steep and stony ; it is covered with thorns and briars, and you will have it all torn.”

“ Never mind it,” said the new hamadryad, and, gathering up her skirts, she slowly began the ascent. The little peasant, bare-footed and bare-armed, with her skirt scarcely reaching to her ankles, and a loose waist of coarse linen, climbed the slope like a

mountain goat ; but Lauretta, who was totally unaccustomed to such roads, with her low-cut, high-heeled silk shoes, according to the prevailing fashion, went on slowly and awkwardly. Her wide skirts, gathered up around her, formed a sort of screen, which prevented her from seeing where she placed her feet. The poor girl suffered much discomfort from a tight, whale-boned waist and a mere pretence of a hat, which left her face entirely exposed to the sun ; but the desire of gaining her end—the triumph of having climbed the *Devil's Pathway*, the wish to see the view from that culminating point of the great rock of San Valentino—was her sole and predominating thought.

The child went on before, singing ; or when she saw a goat clinging to a peak or browsing on the bushes, she called it, in order to see it prick up its ears and raise its head ; again she amused herself by throwing pebbles down the rock, and laughed aloud to see them leap and roll downwards in their dizzy course. But on reaching one very difficult point the little girl turned and called to her companion :

“Take care, my lady ; hold on to those rocks there. Do not be afraid ; I have often passed that place with a basket on my head.”

The little peasant was right ; the young lady was obliged to get on her knees and cross the dangerous passage on all-fours. She had already gone half way along the narrow, rugged pathway, verging on a precipice at either side ; the higher she went, the more steep and almost perpendicular became the way. The abysses which opened on either side were

dark and gloomy, their depths hidden by the thick and tangled shrubbery which grows in such profusion in these gorges and among the crevices and fissures of the rocks. Lauretta, finding herself thus suspended in space, with no other support for her feet than this narrow path, rugged, steep, and almost as slippery as the blade of a knife, became alarmed, and perceiving above her a little spot of level rock, not much more than a hand's breadth, managed to crawl thither, and stopped, palpitating, breathless, and half-fainting. She would gladly have gone down; but when she remembered the hardships which she would have to face as in ascending, she shuddered with horror, lost courage, and began to tremble in every limb. Feeling that vertigo was seizing her, she crouched down and burst into tears of terror and affright.

At this sight the little peasant watched her in open-mouthed astonishment. She would fain have encouraged Lauretta; but, seeing her weep, she sat speechless at her feet, regarding her with a tender and compassionate air, not venturing to speak. But poor Lauretta was so terrified that great drops of sweat stood out on her forehead; her head dropped on her breast, and she fainted. The little girl, seeing her grow white and motionless, took her hand and shook her gently, saying softly:

“Beautiful lady, do not be afraid; St. Valentine will aid us, for you know he never allows man or beast to roll down these precipices. Give me your hand and I will help you down. . . .”

The little peasant was astonished and terrified

when she saw that Laretta neither answered nor opened her eyes. The poor child, thinking the lady dead, went down in all haste, and, climbing the opposite slope of San Valentino, exclaimed, sobbing with terror :

“The beautiful young lady is dead.”

Meantime, Lida and the other young ladies, missing Laretta, thought she had gone into the woods to take another look at the stream she so much admired, and dispersed themselves through the forest, calling her name aloud. But Lida, knowing her companion's thoughtless and unreflecting ways, on receiving no answer, said to the other young ladies :

“Do not be uneasy, I beg of you. Laretta has probably walked to some distance, where our voices do not reach her, and is now in ecstasy over some flower, or in the contemplation of some beautiful scene.”

Returning through the fields, they met Count d'Almavilla with the other gentlemen, and were all standing together, when the child ran crying toward them, exclaiming :

“The beautiful young lady is dead !”

“What young lady ?” said Giovanni Taddei.

“The young lady,” answered the child, sobbing, “who was going with me up the *Devil's Pathway* to Pianezzuolo.”

The young people, on hearing of this road, supposed that Laretta had slipped through some crevice in the rock, and fallen on the sharp stones ; they cried all at once :



“Where did she fall?”

“She did not fall, but she is lying on a point of the rock, pale, pale, with her eyes closed. I called her, and she did not answer.”

The spot where she lay was directly facing San Valentino's hill, and the valley between was just there so narrow that a good marksman could easily have reached it with a stone; they all ran to the edge of the plain, and, raising their eyes, could perceive Lauretta where she lay perfectly motionless. Count d'Almavilla, thinking her dead, struck his forehead and wept in anguish. The dean sought to console him with hopeful words: “Count, she has probably fainted from fright on seeing herself suspended between the abysses which open on either side; but the mere ascent could never cause any one's death.”

And, raising his voice, he called Lauretta in a tone of thunder. Presently she began to move, and turned towards San Valentino. Then each one made a trumpet of his hands, and shouted to her in a voice which might have split the rocks.

When she at last sat up, they signed to her not to move from the spot. Giovanni Taddei and the dean, accustomed in their hunting expeditions to ascend mountains and scale the most rugged rocks, said to the rest of the party:

“Have no further uneasiness; we will rescue Lauretta from her perilous position, but it will be better to bring her to the castle of Pozzo. The rest of you can mount your horses, and, having come to the bridge of Ala, turn towards the forge,

and ascend by an easy road as far as the millet-field, where I will await you, while the dean will accompany the young lady. If you urge your horses to a fair speed, you can reach Pozzo before sundown."

So saying, Taddei and the dean descended the side of Mount Valentiue, and began to climb the rugged steep of the *Devil's Pathway*.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MANOR OF POZZO.

BESIDES the immense property of the house of Taddei, which is divided into several farms, contains forests of tall fruit trees of every kind, and offers to its possessor all the pleasures of the chase, there are two castles higher up on the mountain of Pozzo, belonging to the Pizzini family ; these are the castle of Pozzo di Mezzo and that of Pozz 'alto, whence came the seigniorial title of Hohenbrunn, which means *high wells*. It is in this last manor, whose surroundings are of a mountainous and sylvan character, that the lords of that house enjoy, during the summer months, the freshness and full, unconstrained freedom which is so especially felt in the midst of woods, beneath the shading branches, with the song of a thousand birds echoing around them, and the frisking of goats, lambs, and cows who browse peacefully upon these slopes, making the vales and woodlands resound with the tinkling of the bells hung around their necks. On these summits hunters chase the hare, fox, and badger. From time to time a solitary bear appears in these regions. The mountaineers often kill these savage beasts, who prey upon the cattle, surprising goats,

lambs, or even young bulls, and drag their prey into the brushwood, devouring it at their leisure. During the autumn months the bears ravage the grain fields, and in a couple of nights destroy all the pear and apple trees upon the domain.

Bear-hunts are nearly always carried on on bright moonlight nights. The bear is tracked either to the grain-fields or to the trees which he plunders, and the hunters hide themselves in the vicinity, and, as soon as the beast advances for his meal, they fire several musket shots at once, till he falls dead. Instead of approaching the prostrate bear, the hunters take flight, and return to the spot next morning, armed with spears and pikes, to discover if the animal is really dead.

To return to our story. In order to conduct Laretta, who was still trembling and weeping upon the little projection of the *Devil's Pathway*, to the castle of Pozzo, Giovanni Taddei and Dean Gresti were obliged to scale that difficult and dangerous road. It was impossible to bring the young girl down once more into the valley of San Valentino, for this stony path was so narrow that there was scarcely room to place one foot before the other, and poor Laretta, between her fright, the novelty of the situation, and the inconvenience of her long dress, was scarcely in a condition to undertake it; but for these daring hunters it was a very trifling thing to hoist her up the remainder of the path to the plain above.

As soon as they reached her, Giovanni, who went up first, took her by the hand and advanced slowly,

step by step, till he led her to the top; Gresti walked behind in case of accident. They took her first to a laborer's cabin, where she took a little wine; then they continued their road through charming and shaded vales to the castle, where, after laying her upon a sofa, still very pale from the effects of her fright, they sought to reassure her by cheerful discourse.

Meantime, Count d'Almavilla, the young lords, and Lauretta's companions, who had mounted their horses, urged them to their full speed to reach Pozzo in good time. They were all reassured as regarded Lauretta; for, before setting foot in the stirrup, they had seen her, having surmounted the various obstacles in the road by the assistance of the intrepid hunters, reach the summit in safety.

Having reached the forges, they were obliged to separate. The greater number of the party returned to the town, while the three brothers Pizini, the count, Fanny, and Lida rode up the slope, conversing pleasantly, and admiring from the lofty heights the magnificent aspect of the great valleys of Ronchi and Valbuona, whose peaks still wore their white mantle of snow and their glittering crown of ice that lie almost perpetually upon these high crests.

While the travellers were mounting the heights, young Taddei had sent word to the people of Pozzo di Mezzo that the housekeeper might have the apartments prepared, the beds made, and a rural supper ordered, composed of broiled eggs, sausages,



cheese, and *ricotte*—a sort of soft cheese, which, when fresh, is delicious—and a good dish of cherries and wild strawberries fresh picked, which was all they could hope to find thus unexpectedly in this wild place, as provisions could not be brought from the town before the following day.

After having taken a short rest, Lauretta, with her usual vivid imagination and levity of character, had completely forgotten the danger she had run, and recovered from her unexpected fright. She amused herself in examining the hunting pictures which adorned the walls of the apartment, asking who were these beautiful ladies, so richly appavelled, who, mounted on such superb palfreys, followed the hounds in pursuit of the deer, which seemed on the point of falling under the blows of the hunters who seemed to have awaited him at the ford. The dean replied that it was one of the royal hunts of Amadeus II., King of Sardinia, at his castle of Veneria; that the lady riding at the head was the queen, and the others were the ladies of the court; that the knights were the esquires and great vassals of the crown, following the king, who had at the moment struck down the deer with a musket-shot, while the queen, according to custom, was to finish it by giving it the final blow with her lance. The other pictures represented “The Departure for the Hunt,” “The Pursuit,” “The Death,” “The Flourish of Trumpets,” and, finally, “The Return to Veneria.”

Meantime, Taddei was awaiting the arrival of the travellers at the appointed meeting-place of the

millet-field. As soon as they appeared he hastened to meet them, to give them the good news of Lauretta, who had already forgotten her fright, her fainting-fit, and the *Devil's Pathway*. They dismounted at the chapel of SS. Simon and Jude, which was near the manor; here they refreshed themselves, and, having remounted, rode on to Pozzo di Mezzo. This pretty manor was situated in a spreading slope arising from the midst of a broad meadow, shaded by great clusters of large trees, and proudly overtopping the valley of the Adige, where the traveller coming from Italy beholds it, far above him, gleaming white from out the leafy gloom of the ancient forests. The evening meal was enlivened by brilliant and animated conversation, till the young ladies, wearied by the excitement which they had undergone, as well as by their long ride, asked permission to retire to their rooms, where they were soon sleeping soundly and tranquilly; but the men remained at table and discussed some bottles of old *vernaccia*, which they called in those parts *vin Santo*, and, planning and arranging a hunting-party for the next day, they prolonged their conversation far into the night.

At dawn they were all astir; the hounds were put in leash, and young Taddei, acting as keeper of the hounds, led the hunt to the woods of Pozz'alto, let loose the setters, who barked and sniffed as they found the scent, and set them off upon the tracks of the hare, assigning to the hunters their several posts. The animal was soon unearthed, and

the echoes of the hills repeated and multiplied the barking of the hounds, who rushed forward, ardent and impetuous, to turn the game and drive it within reach of the hunters.

Whilst the young men followed the chase, the young ladies, in a careless morning costume, after having breakfasted on the sweet milk which was served fresh from the cows just returned from the perfumed pastures of thyme, mint, and marjoram, went forth to enjoy the pure and reviving air of the morning, laden with the subtle odor from the pasture lands of the surrounding meadows. Lauretta, who was less inured to these rural pleasures, thoroughly enjoyed herself listening to the warblings of the nightingales, whose voices rose high and clear from the aerial chorus of the varied birds who made their nests in the trees and ledges that surrounded this poetic dwelling. Leaving Fanny busied with domestic cares and the arrangements for dinner, Lida and Lauretta, arm in arm, strolled in the fields, singing gayly, and, having climbed the hill, seated themselves under the shade of a thick chestnut-tree to enjoy the beauty of the scene. Passing from one subject to another, the conversation turned upon the life and habits of the noble young Tyrolean ladies, which Lida found greatly to her taste, because they seemed to unite grace and elegance of manners with the graver domestic habits in which they were formed by their excellent mothers.

“Pooh!” said Lauretta with a disdainful curl of the lip, “do you think so? Is it so fine to see

them on Saturdays counting and taking a list of the soiled linen for the laundress? And when the linen is bleached and dried, these beautiful young ladies are very attractive, are they not, in the laundry, busied, note in hand, with finding if every piece is correct? . . . And would you believe it? I saw it myself—saw Bettina Pizzini take the iron from the hands of the laundry-maid and iron her father's sleeve-ruffles, after having starched them herself! I would like to see myself descend to do a servant's work! Is that the proper occupation for a noble lady?"

"Why not? I think all that perfectly right; for while amusing themselves with such occupations, they accustom themselves . . ."

"To become housemaids, do you mean? . . ."

"Let me finish, Lauretta, I beg of you. They accustom themselves to manage their own households, direct the seamstresses in their work, and understand with what order and neatness the linen should be folded and ironed. The servants, fearing the watchful observation of their mistress, will fulfil their duties properly and exactly. Do you not know that Marie Clotilde, who will be our queen, and has been educated at the court of France, keeps her own accounts, wherein she marks all the expenses, and desires that every month her attendant lady of honor should give her a note of everything, even to the smallest articles? And Marie-Thérèse, wife of Victor Emanuel, daughter of the royal house of Austria as she is, watches over her attendants with wonderful strictness.

Believe me, Laretta, many great houses go to ruin through the domestic incapacity of their mistresses."

"Well, do you not see, my Lida, Fanny is now in the kitchen; and yesterday, at San Valentino, she and her sister Rosa, in their silk dresses, made us various confections . . ."

"Which you found delicious and praised very highly, while the young men extolled to the skies those fair hands which manufactured such delicate viands. If you travelled through Germany, you would see that the richest and noblest young ladies are the most perfect cooks. They are unsurpassed in the kitchen, for there, as in the Tyrol, there are no men-cooks; only women are employed in this way, and perform their duties with an extraordinary neatness and skill which is rare among men."

"Ah! my Lida, you may well say so. They seem to me like noble kitchen-maids. I assure you that seeing them so active and accomplished in all these feminine labors provokes me beyond measure. Would not any one who heard them discourse on all these household cares suppose that they were obliged to earn their bread by the day?"

"See the difference in tastes! I am really fond of all those things. I love that active and studious life so much that I think these young ladies are really the most accomplished in the whole world. I find, on the contrary, that the education of young Italian girls in most cases makes them so frivolous, idle, and useless that if I were a young man I would as soon marry a bag of wool as some of these



brainless creatures, capable of nothing more than existing, with hands folded, fattening themselves like birds in a cage, dragging themselves from room to room, caressing their dogs or parrots, reclining on a sofa, making eyes at silly fops, or talking politics from morning till night. Does that life seem tolerable to you? Should we not rather extol these Tyrolean ladies of rank, brought up to domestic cares, and yet so engaging, simple, natural, and gracious in their manners?"

"Oh! you speak charmingly; but you should add to this domestic simplicity the epithet of golden, *aurea simplicitas*, which has, in truth, an odor of the happy days of the Ildeburgas, Emmas, and Roswindes, the mouldy, Gothic perfume of the good Lombard kings, who brought up their daughters to the distaff and shuttle. Let me add that the Pizzinis bring back to me the old monastic times. Bettina is so humble and cringing before Signor Giuseppe and Signora Marianna that she seems like a novice in presence of the mother abbess. Do you know, Lida, that I almost burst with laughing when I think of it? About three days ago Bettina came in one morning to her papa and mamma; first she kissed her papa's hand, asking his blessing; then knelt before her mamma and did the same; and Signora Marianna, with clerical gravity, blessed her, saying in Latin, my dear: 'May the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost descend and rest upon thee!' and made the sign of the cross in the air. I had to put my handkerchief to my mouth, or I should have

laughed in their faces. I imagined myself, at least, in a convent of Poor Clares."

"Say in a Christian home. My father, although he is a soldier, blesses me every night and morning, and so does my mother. Papa is often in uniform, with his epaulettes, great spurred boots, and helmet; and yet he blesses me. I never go to rest without my parents' blessing, even when I am obliged to wait till after midnight for it."

"But these absurdities are out of date. . . . Before seating herself at the table Bettina always says grace, and also before leaving it, and, instead of embracing her parents, kisses their hands. These are mere monkish superstitions."

"Do not speak so, Laretta. It is easy to see you were educated by that Elvire like a little pagan. These beautiful practices are still found throughout; for infidel philosophy has not yet succeeded in uprooting them entirely. Does not God give to the monks the food for which they thank him? And do we not partake of better and more abundant nourishment than these poor religious? The Italians still honor their parents; they still fear Jesus, our Saviour; they still love the Church; they still frequent the sacraments. You, who are so learned in history, must know that among the oldest nations the father of the family was king or patriarch. Every time you treat your father with that disrespectful familiarity I pity you and feel ashamed."

"Ah! I see. . . . You wish me to take as a model people who say, Your Lordship, between

man and wife. I feel like laughing when Signor Giuseppe says to his wife, 'Yes, *signora*,' bowing and standing aside to let her pass as they go from one room to another; and the same way with Signor Gianbattista Pizzini to his wife Isabella, and Donato de Gresti to his; and I assure you it is really laughable to see them so ceremonious. When we go to dine with Signor Gianbattista, do you notice the young men who are now hunting with papa rise from the table to kiss his hand. Three great donkeys! bending to kiss his hand like babies. I would wager they ask his blessing, too; and even Taddei of old Baron Antonio, his honored father."

"Certainly, and so do all well-brought-up children; but you must have also noticed how they honor their parents, love their brothers, and are polite, modest, frank, and courteous to every one; always saluting the poor people first; always affable to their servants, charitable to the poor, loyal to their friends; gay, cheerful, and agreeable in society; but always proper and reserved, devoted to God and to the Church. Put your hand on your heart and tell me which you would prefer for a husband: one of those infidels, idle, whimsical, cruel, fierce, sensual, or a pious, virtuous, and prudent young man? Which do you think would make you happier?"

"Bah! nonsense! Always the same tune. God preserve us from your cant, my good lady moralist! . . . I will choose a husband to my taste without any of these comparisons, let things go as they

may. And now that is enough upon that subject. Let us go in. I saw in one of the lower rooms a little stand full of books, and among them I espied Marmontel's novels. I always found his 'Bergère des Alpes' very entertaining. I wanted my father to take me to the top of Monte Cenisio, where that unfortunate knight was killed, through love for the beautiful shepheress."

The young girls returned to the manor, and Lauretta became absorbed in her trashy novels, while Lida helped Fanny to beat the whipped cream, butter the thin slices of bread, and sugar the wild strawberries and raspberries, whose bright, vivid scarlet makes them such a pretty sight.

About noon they heard the hunting-horns sounding triumphantly, and soon saw the hunters themselves returning, proud of having slain a couple of hares, one of which was killed by Count d'Almavilla. Whilst the gentlemen were in their rooms changing their hunting costumes, dinner was served, and the bell soon brought all the famished hunters to the table, where they found the young ladies. Various roast meats opened the meal. At dessert, the conversation became animated; incidents of the chase were related; how the dogs unearthed the hare from under the fir-trees; how it sprung into the pine forest; how it passed between Prospero's legs before he noticed; how it lay hidden in the brushwood for some time, but, venturing to peep out, came face to face with Giovanni, who shot it in the face and blinded it; now it bounded forward and then attempted to take a leap, and

succeeded in reaching the brushwood, where it drew its last breath.

“ Good ! bravo ! Nanni ; but the count made a master-stroke. He caught the animal on his lance, just as it was about to fling itself, in despair, over the edge of the precipice of Pozz’alto to the depths below.”

And new applause followed, accompanied by bumpers of old Vin Santo, which increased the eloquence and warmth of the toasts addressed to the count and his young ladies.

From hunting they passed to the French Revolution and its excesses ; the captivity of the king and queen ; the torments and humiliations inflicted on them on their way to the Temple ; the dangers and the anxiety which they underwent ; and the sharp blade of the guillotine suspended over royal heads. Thence to the intrigues of the Freemasons ; the impious and delusive artifices by which they sought to pervert the Italians. In this connection was mentioned the famous Count Cagliostro, who was then so much talked of, and whose jugglery astonished the world. Some one related how a few years previous he came into the Tyrol, and began his system of knavery in the town of Roveredo, three or four leagues from Ala. The Count d’Almavilla, struck by these words, asked :

“ But who is this man who astonishes, dismays, and agitates all around him ? There is something great, it seems to me, in the wonders which you relate of him. Is he still at Roveredo ? ”

“ He is no longer there,” said Antonio Pizzini ;



“but, alas! would that he had never been. The impostor, on leaving Roveredo, went to Trent, from there to Rome, where Pius IX. had him seized by the officers of justice and cast into the dungeon of the Castle of San Angelo, where he found means to make him sing like a thrush.”

“Well, there it is again! What connection is there between the dungeon of San Angelo, the officers of justice, and a man like that? I have heard him spoken of frequently as a great man—a genius. And yet prison is a bad ending for any one. In a word, tell me something more about him, as we are upon the subject.”

Antonio Pizzini, who was a well-informed young man, resumed:

“I cannot do better than quote, word for word, what Anibal Caro said on this subject of Antonio di Piperno, the most noted impostor of that time. Here it is:

“Behold him caught at last in a snare, this cardinal, this ambassador, this satrap, this bishop, this lord, this baron, who changes himself into so many personages; who has as many names as he has titles; who has had so many dignities; who knows so many things and has performed so many actions; this invisible man, who is everywhere; who is free in every prison; who is master in every dwelling; who is always any one else but himself; this great calculator, this maker of bulls, this arch-magician, this philosopher, this physician, this sorcerer, this alchemist, in a word, this *panurgo*. He is master of all arts, speaks all

languages, has been in all countries, knows every one, while remaining unknown to every one; of a ready and demoniac genius, a slow mode of action, grave of speech, holding opinions which he changes in the twinkling of an eye, finding a handle for every axe, a string for every bow. He has chaff for every bird, and scarcely sees a man before he knows him thoroughly. Nothing is apparent in his countenance, neither shame, nor fear, nor any sentiment whatsoever. Falsehood seems truth upon his lips; his words are as pearls. So numerous are his transformations that he may be called a Proteus. He is neither man nor beast, but both one and the other; a mixture of the admirable and monstrous."

"This is what Caro expresses in his beautiful language; but had he known this Count Cagliostro, he would, I am sure, have spoken of him differently. Antonio Piperno was, without doubt, an adroit swindler, but the other aims higher, acts like a scion of royalty. Why, you would say he was a descendant of the Spanish or French kings, from his assumption of grandeur and his magnificent pretensions. I have often seen him drawn by six horses, like milk-white swans, in a carriage profusely gilded, harnesses with golden buckles, and bearing the arms of the count, surmounted by a coronet, like the dukes of the empire, with his outriders and lackeys in liveries plentifully garnished with gold lace. He reclined in his carriage, decorated with orders and badges, wearing the crosses of Malta, of St. Stephen, and St. Maurice, in garments richly embroidered with gold or

diamonds, having on his fingers diamonds as large as nuts and of the first water. You would have mistaken him for an archduke of Austria, or an Infanta of Spain or Portugal."

"You tell me such wonders that I feel as one in a dream," said the count, "hearing of such magnificence in an unknown. When was he at Roveredo?"

"Some years ago; but I remember it as well as if it were yesterday. Our lively contemporary Clementi Vannetti founded on him a tale in the Oriental style, in which one is forced to laugh at the gorgeous display. But what he has fully succeeded in is the publication of his trial at Rome, wherein was exposed to the world at large the intrigues and impostures of that hero of the prison and the halter."

"Oh!" said the count, "pray relate us some of them."





## CHAPTER VII.

### COUNT CAGLIOSTRO.

THEY were all a little heated, thanks to the good old *Vino Santo*. Laretta, who was always impatient at any delay in the gratification of her desires, seeing that Giovanni Taddei seemed disposed to propose some more toasts, stood up, and, placing her two hands upon the table, flashed a terrible glance on the young man, saying :

“Halloo there, Signor Giovanni ! a truce to your gallantry for a while ; just now I am anxious to hear the adventures of this extraordinary man. Signor Antonio, you have overwhelmed me with curiosity, and this enchanter of Cagliostro will undoubtedly be a perfect marvel to us.”

“That, without doubt,” replied Antonio d’Hoch-enbrunn. “Why, signorina, you will hear wonders which will certainly appear fabulous to you ; you will, indeed, be astonished to see that our century, which boasts so many lights, has yet allowed itself to be blinded by the faint lustre of a glow-worm.”

“It is always the case,” said the dean, “and I should be surprised to see it otherwise ; it is always

observed that an age which pretends to superior wisdom is the most easily imposed upon and befooled in chastisement for its pride. It denies the divine light of Christ, and is plunged into profound darkness, where it gropes helplessly round till it strikes its head against a rock and is dashed to pieces. Wherever infidelity reigns supreme superstition is grossest and most revolting. Paris, where the infamous Voltaire persists in denying God ; London, St. Petersburg, Amsterdam, which refuse to recognize the Pope, and consequently Christ and his Church, have been deluded by the quackery of this Cagliostro. But in Rome ! Oh ! Rome has too much faith, and cannot, therefore, let itself be deceived by such open imposture—they seized this new god of the Freemasons, cast him into a dungeon, stripped him of his peacock feathers, exposed him in good earnest.”

“That is it exactly,” said Antonio. “They literally plucked him so at Rome that the poor devil has since remained *in puris naturalibus*. He was made sing so lustily in his coop that the world recognized him under his borrowed plumage. It must also be observed that in our Tyrol the faith was too strong to permit us to be misled by the glitter of tinsel. Cagliostro was squashed so by Clementino Vannetti, in his ‘*Memorialis de Calestro dum esset Roboreti*,’ that the poor hero resembled some actors who, upon the boards, are kings covered with gold and precious stones, but behind the scenes the usurer strips them of everything, if indeed he does not cause the bailiff to put them in a



place where they only see the sun through a grating."

"Too many reflections," said Lauretta impatiently; "I do not like this moralizing. Come, then, one good jump, and leave them for good, Signor Antonio."

"Off I go, then," said the young man, scratching his forehead as if to try and recall all the facts which he had read in the trial at Rome,\* and those he had heard related by various persons who were well informed in regard to Cagliostro's fine doings, and all the dupes he had made at Roveredo. Turning to d'Almavilla, he said:

"This precursor of the Freemasons, who came to corrupt Italy and prepare it for revolt, was born at Palermo, June 8, 1743, and was a son of Pietro Balsamo and Felicetta Braconieri, people of humble origin, who lived by the labor of their hands. They gave him the name of Giuseppe."

"What!" interrupted Lida, "was he not a count, and of the name of Cagliostro?"

"Not at all. He called himself count to make himself of more account; he took the name of Cagliostro, as robbers or outlaws do, to screen himself from justice. You will see that Cagliostro was not the only name he went by; he had at least

\* "Processo del Cagliostro (trial of Cagliostro)." Published A. D. 1799, by the press of the reverend Apostolic Chamber. We add this note because many of our readers, having read all the extravagant things we relate in these chapters, might suppose that they were due to the vivid imagination of the author of 'Ubaldo.' The trial of Cagliostro has been published, and every one can read, at their leisure, these and many similar circumstances which we were unable to mention in our book." (Author's note.)

a dozen . . . and for very good reasons. In the first place, he was a wretch from his very childhood. At thirteen his father placed him with the Brothers Hospitaliers (Frate Ben Fratelli), and he was put as a pupil into the pharmacy. He there learned chemistry, botany, and many chemical secrets. He ingratiated himself so much with the prior, by his quickness of perception, his ready understanding combined with great intelligence, refinement, and subtlety, his polite manner and good address, that he made him take the soutane, and loved him with almost paternal tenderness. The young rogue by his hypocrisy made himself agreeable to the brothers, from whom he stole so craftily that in a short time he had amassed a little fortune of ounces of gold, which he kept concealed in a belt that he always wore next his skin. He was so malicious that he played a thousand tricks on the good brothers, even going so far as to insert in the pious books that he read aloud to them in the refectory all sorts of disgusting stories, which made these poor religious blush. He carried his audacity to such an excess that, when reciting the martyrology, in place of the names of the saints, he mentioned some of the vilest creatures the town."

"O the miserable wretch!" cried the dean, "the audacious villain! And these good servants of God reared such a viper in their midst . . .?"

"The reptile was at last discovered and ignominiously expelled; but the worthy young novice, once more at home with his father, played

the vagrant, always preserving an appearance of truth, which with his fresh young face would have deceived the craftiest sharpers of Palermo. Soon he became an adept in picking pockets, thieving, and jugglery, so much so that watches and purses, even if they were sewed or glued to their possessors, were appropriated by him so skilfully, delicately, and promptly that it would seem as if they had wings. *Apropos* of this, a Roman prelate related the following incident to me: Being at Palermo for the feast of Saint Rosalie, where there is always a noisy crowd, wishing to escape the din and bustle of the multitude, he walked out one evening along by the walls in a solitary quiet spot. Among the bulwarks and under the parapets there were ruined and unroofed places, whence he thought he heard issuing some stifled sounds. His curiosity being excited, he approached a crevice, and saw among the ruins two boys, who seemed to be practising the art of picking pockets. One gently raised the skirt of the other's coat, and carefully removing the handkerchief, made a feint of continuing his way. As he accomplished this, he said to his companion.

“ ‘Balsamo, could you feel me do that?’ ”

“ ‘I could feel you.’ ”

“ And the other stamped his feet, clenched his fists, and scowled, saying :

“ ‘Plague take me !’ ”

“ Then he began again, and jostled Balsamo, and, as he did so, removing the handkerchief, then he passed on and asked :

“ ‘Did you feel that?’

“ ‘No!’ was the reply.

“ And then they were satisfied. The prelate, laughing at the talent of the master as well as that of the pupil, went his way; but wishing to see the time, he put his hand in his pocket to draw out his beautiful gold repeater. But he looked in vain. Whilst he was amusing himself with the adroitness of the two young rogues, a third, who had followed him, unnoticed, had snatched his watch.”

The company made merry at the expense of the curious prelate; then Antonio resumed the history of Cagliostro, as follows:

“ Balsamo next made a specialty of deceiving the monks by offering to obtain for them from Rome, or from the potentates of the kingdom, all the extravagant and impossible privileges which might enter their heads. Having become a skilful forger, and understanding perfectly the imitation of all sorts of seals, signs, and bulls, he sold to these poor fathers his fraudulent productions for their weight in gold.”

“ It is laughable to think,” said Prospero, “ how these good people would believe that privileges or indulgences coming from Rome would pass through the hands of this audacious forger.”

“ But his vilest imposture was the fabrication of a certain document in favor of a Marquis Maurigi, through which he obtained an immense inheritance of fiefs and territories on which he had not the slightest claim! Balsamo was suspected of the murder of a canon, who was found dead, after hav-

ing been robbed of valuable articles and a large sum of money. Balsamo was arrested, but he managed so well that he was released, though not acquitted, on condition that he would appear when summoned. Still under the cloud of such an accusation, the wretch played a detestable trick upon a silversmith, Morano, whom, not content with having openly robbed, he made the laughing-stock of Palermo.

“Balsamo assumed, among his other extraordinary powers, to have an intimate acquaintance with the most secret mysteries of nature, and the art of converting, by means of the crucible and mortar, every metal into pure gold, or multiplying the weight of the latter. Pouring these absurdities into the ear of Morano, whom he knew to be a skilful goldsmith, but also very avaricious, he felt certain that he would not turn a deaf ear to him. And, in fact, Morano took him aside one day, and said, smiling :

“‘Ah! little Giuseppe, you are wasting your time in fancying you can multiply the weight and volume of gold.’

“‘What! fancying? I only wish I had a pin’s weight of gold. . . . I would make it as heavy as an anvil.’

“‘Stuff!’

“‘Stuff?’

“‘Prove it.’

“‘I will prove it.’

“‘Very well. I will give you sixty good ounces; can you make them six thousand? . . .’

“‘Just as surely as two and two make four,’ re-



sponded the audacious wretch ; ‘ and I know a cave in the side of a hill, in a little valley near here, which might have been made on purpose for our work. Take a vial of acid of lemon, a little flask, well corked, of essence of vitriol, and a cloth.’

“ ‘ Anything else necessary ? ’

“ ‘ That is all,’ said the alchemist.

“ Night came, and they set out.

“ Having reached the cave, which was at no great distance, and which they found overgrown with weeds and briars, Balsamo, by the light of a lantern, dug a hole in the sand, placed there the sixty ounces of gold wrapped in a cloth, sprinkled with vitriol and essence of lemon, which immediately began to shrivel and crackle ; then he replaced the earth over it, and trampled it so that no trace of the excavation appeared. That done, he returned to the town with the goldsmith, promising to meet him there the following night.

“ Next day, about twilight, Balsamo repaired to Morano, and said to him :

“ ‘ Comrade, pluck up your courage, for to-night we will see horrible sights.’

“ ‘ What ! is it possible we are to have any transactions with Versiera ? ’ \*

“ ‘ Far worse, my friend—oh ! far, far worse. For it sometimes happens that Satan, in a fit of perversity, grasps the gold so tightly that it is impossible to wrest it from his claws, for he regards it as his own property.’

\* The arch-enchantress.

“ ‘I do not see what the devil could want with my gold. What claim has he on it ?’

“ ‘I will tell you. Gold has almost always belonged to people who were murdered in the olden times ; and you know the saying : “Stolen goods are the devil’s goods.” Therefore he owns treasure enough on all sides to fill the universe ; but when any one takes so much as a crumb from him he becomes enraged. . . . But I will tell you what to do, comrade. Before leaving the house sprinkle yourself well with holy water, and fear nothing.’

“ This done, they set out.

“ But when they drew near the cave, Morano felt drops of sweat oozing out of his pores, and that trembling of the limbs which in plain words is called fear, and the worst kind of fear, too ; still, the six thousand ounces were a thought capable of inflaming the coldest heart.

“ ‘ Courage !’ said Balsamo ; ‘ nerve yourself ; be brave, and we will break Beelzebub’s horns.’

“ So saying, he laid his little lantern on the ground, and, after tracing a circle on the ground with his finger, he leaped into the middle of the ring, and began to mutter in a low voice a stream of unconnected words. All of a sudden there was a flash of light . . . a fearful clap of thunder, all coming from a recess of the cave. From the opposite side, concealed by a projection of the rock, came confused noises, a horrible din as of an earthquake, a deluge—the end of the world, it might seem ! . . .

“ We need not ask if Morano shuddered at these frightful sounds, and trembled at the peals of

thunder which shook the cavern to its furthest depths. Balsamo shouted to him frantically :

“ Leap into the ring ! ”

“ But at this moment a vivid light suddenly illumined the depths of the cavern, followed by groans and fearful howlings ; four fierce, hairy demons rushed out, and, falling upon Morano, beat and bruised him mercilessly. Balsamo screamed and made a pretence of defending him ; but the demons ground their teeth, and, with horrible grimaces, put him to flight with their claws. The unfortunate goldsmith, bruised, beaten, scratched, and half dead with fright, succeeded, by a great effort, in rescuing himself from their claws and dragged himself home, where he took to bed with a burning fever, from which he did not recover for several days. However it was, Morano finally learned that this deceiver had fooled him, and, after having submitted him to such ill-usage, had robbed him of his gold. He was so infuriated that he vowed by the gods never to take rest or respite till he had taken the thief and sent him to rot in jail. Balsamo, getting wind of it, escaped from Palermo, from which he was banished by the sentence of the tribunal for the trial of sorcerers, as well as from any lands or territories thereunto appertaining. He went straight to Messina, where, as at Palermo, he lived by fraud and plunder. There he formed a close intimacy with a foreigner called Altotas, who was known as a Greek or a Spaniard, whichever best served his purpose. This man was a vender of charms, an astrologer, a master of occult

sciences, and a fortune-teller. Besides being an alchemist, a distiller of magical liquids, he knew Greek, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Balsamo had found his match, and the disciple became indeed greater than the master.

“They travelled together. They went to Alexandria in Egypt, to Cairo, Damascus, Aleppo, Bagdad, and finally to Mecca, on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Mahomet. During his stay in the East Balsamo learned to speak several languages, learned various secrets from rabbis, dervishes, uromancers, magicians, and notorious humbugs of all kinds. Together with Altotas, they made money among the Copts, Syrians, and Arabs, passing themselves off as physicians, mathematicians, and astronomers, and thus deluding viziers, cadis, pashas, caliphs, and whole caravans of merchants, cheating them out of gold, silver, and jewels, so that they amassed a large fortune. But as all these strange beings threw away with one hand what they stole with the other, and to-day were princes, to-morrow beggars—yesterday with a royal train of camels, priceless Arab steeds, and to-day living on charity—it was precisely the same with our two adventurers. Leaving the East, they made their way to Rhodes; thence they repaired to Malta, where they entered the laboratory of the great master of chemistry, Pinto, and set to work in good earnest to distil essences for foreigners, principally Mussulmans, and gained enormous sums of money. Altotas died suddenly, and Balsamo, who was under the imputation of

certain evil transactions, fearing that he might fall into the hands of justice, and having taken the precaution to procure from different knights some letters of recommendation to Naples, hastened thither. But there also he played so many pranks, and worked so hard at his old trade, that he was obliged to set out in hot haste for Rome.

“Rome, the capital of the Christian world, is perhaps, of all others, the spot where rogues thrive the least; still, some of them settle themselves there, at least for some time, hold their heads high, and carry things with a high hand.

“Among the young ladies who attracted our adventurer’s attention in that city, where all are pretty, he distinguished the charming Lorenzina Feliciani, who lived near the Trinita de’ Pellegrini. Balsamo went so craftily to work that the father, mother, and brothers of the young girl, thinking him an excellent and even a superior young man, became very intimate with him, and gave him free access to their house. Winning Lorenzina’s love, he asked and obtained her hand, and, making a pretence of sending to Palermo for his credentials, which he fabricated himself, he married her in the church of San Salvatore in Campo.

“Lorenzina, who had been carefully brought up by a virtuous mother, was as pious and modest as she was beautiful and charming; but, having fallen into the clutches of this villain, he formed infamous plans concerning her, and obliged her to dress sumptuously, and to make herself as enticing



as possible. The virtuous wife wept and murmured, and even had recourse to her mother; but with such a miscreant all such complaints were vain. Her tears gained her nothing but reproaches, cruel blows, and all manner of ill-usage, till at last he consigned her to a pretended Marquis Agliata, a Sicilian by birth, and a sharper and a cheat by profession, who kept up wonderful state in Rome, making a great display with his retinue of servants, his fine horses, his dinners, and all sorts of entertainments.

“Balsamo became Agliata’s shadow, and Lorenzina often watched them close themselves up in their room, where they remained for hours in mysterious silence. Once, when wearied of solitude and tired of reading or work, she bent her head, and, looking through the key-hole of the door, she perceived the two allies, seated at a table, employed in imitating and forging notes of exchange, bank-notes, and letters of credit. She then understood whence came the money which was spent in such lavish profusion in the house. Balsamo, appreciating the great perfection which Agliata had attained in the noble art of forgery, had him forge for his use a colonel’s commission in the service of the King of Prussia, signed officially, ‘Frederick II.,’ and duly sealed and stamped with the royal seal. He procured himself a uniform of his rank, and afterwards, in Paris and London, wore the insignia of a colonel and assumed the air of a frank and jovial soldier.”

“Good,” said Domenico, “having probably been

with the infidel king in the campaigns of Poland and Sweden. He was indeed a valiant and worthy colonel of cheats."

"That is true, brother," said Antomo. "Balsamo, the thief, played at Rome the part of the hero of a comedy ; but Rome has a keen scent, and, as I said before, tracks the hare to its den. If our good colonel and his marquis had not taken to their heels, they would have certainly obtained places in the *Ceri Nove*\* under their real title of forgers, or would have obtained, at last, a real certificate for the permanent post of *oarsmen*. Our worthy men, having changed their names, set out in a post-chaise with four horses for the Marshes, passed through Roumania and Venice, passing their counterfeit notes in all these places, until they came to Bergamo, where they stopped, and were arrested on suspicion of seeking to raise recruits for the Austro-Sardinian service. At the time of his arrest our colonel found means to slip to his wife a roll of false notes, which she managed to conceal upon her person ; and this saved him from a trial in which he would have had little chance of escape, while under the former accusation he was simply banished from the states of the Republic of Venice. Agliata, however, more adroit than his associate, had already escaped to Milan, carrying with him, moreover, all Cagliostro's money and other valuables. Being released from prison, and seeing himself thus plundered by his worthy associate, Cagliostro said to his wife :

\* New prison.

“ ‘Lorenzina, my dear, we must set our wits to work, or we will die of hunger.’

“ He went to a pawn-shop and purchased two large pilgrim’s hats covered with oil-cloth; he enveloped himself in a sort of a gown, confined at the waist by a strap, placed two scallop-shells in his wife’s hat, and then, being provided with a wallet and a gourd, they set out, staff in hand, wearing rosaries round their necks, as pious pilgrims journeying to San Giacomo di Gallizia, begging their way, or dispensing miraculous powders for infant diseases, headaches, ague, and colic. Balsamo made quite a good sum out of the peasants by these powders. At last the holy pilgrims reached Spain. There, having left their pilgrim’s dress by the roadside, Cagliostro resumed his career as a chemist, and, proclaiming the marvellous power of his distillations, cheated his neighbors in every possible way, at the same time selling his wife’s favor to different powerful lords, till at last he was driven out of Madrid, and was obliged to fall back on Portugal. At Lisbon, by cheating alike noble and peasant, he succeeded in amassing quite a little treasure of glittering Portuguese gold. Not yet satisfied, he managed to steal from a rich jeweller of the town beautiful necklaces, superb bracelets of topaz, aquamarine, emeralds, and Brazilian rubies, worth a fortune; but warned by experience, and anxious to anticipate danger, Cagliostro as soon as possible took passage on an English vessel bound for London, carrying with him all the jewels.”

“He had good taste,” interrupted Fanny; “the glitter of the precious stones had a powerful attraction in his eyes, and reawakened his appetite. But did he arrive safely with his cargo?”

“Yes,” answered Antonio; “but here we come back to the proverb, ‘Honesty is the best policy.’ Having reached London, Cagliostro formed an intimacy with another pretended marquis, the Marquis de Vivona, who cheated him in his turn. Vivona represented himself as high in favor at court; and promising Cagliostro to dispose of all his jewels to King George or to the Duchess of Sussex, took the whole collection, and, leaving Cagliostro, embarked on a vessel bound for Calais, and bid farewell to England. Cagliostro did not lose courage, being a man of many resources, and he managed to obtain a hundred thousand pounds sterling from a Quaker by a trick which I need not relate. London is the Eldorado of humbugs of all sorts. Therefore Cagliostro found a wide field for his labors. He posted up placards in all parts of the city, announcing that a great chemist from Bagdad had brought from the East the secret of the water of perpetual youth, giving it a mysterious Arab name, and adding a long list of balsams and ointments to remove wrinkles, to whiten the skin, to dye the hair black or brown or golden, while remaining apparently so natural that neither the flight of years nor the infirmities of age could ever alter its gloss and its vigor.”

“He must have found a good market for his

drugs," said Lauretta, laughing, as she passed her hand over her carefully-dressed hair, with a complacent air which seemed to say: "I have no need of Cagliostro's secrets."

"He sold them so readily and for so high a price, the smallest box or vial bringing a guinea at least, that he made a fortune. Old ladies went thither, spending twenty, fifty, or a hundred pounds sterling at a time, to obtain the means of appearing young and to have their wrinkles removed. Cagliostro promised them that, at two months at furthest, they would have all the freshness, bloom, and brilliancy of the prettiest damsels in the three kingdoms. The old ladies swallowed this, and rubbed themselves with hard brushes, hair gloves, and, in a word, underwent perfect martyrdom; but the hope of making themselves young sweetened every torment. It was a fine sight to see these old ladies admiring themselves and strutting around before the mirror. Cagliostro did not wait for the time of the grand transformation; he packed his portmanteau, changed his money to Parisian currency, and, crossing the Straits of Dover, arrived in Paris in princely state."

"The world is, then, the prey of sharpers," exclaimed Taddei.

"Truly," answered Antonio; "and now we see him at Paris, a favorite with the great ladies of the court of Louis XV., promising them all sorts of marvels by virtue of his art. The report was current, and spread like wildfire, that Count Cagliostro was going to impart to court ladies the secret



of eternal youth. He had some intrigues, which also contributed to fill his purse with *louis-d'or* ; and the knave knew so well how to steer in every wind that when they blew contrary he always managed to trim his sails so that he breasted the fiercest waves and floated triumphantly upon their crests. Everything seemed to prosper with him ; he turned everything to advantage ; his snares were set with such promptitude and address, and with such diabolical craftiness, that the most wary were deceived, and the Parisians fell into the trap and were completely gulled by his artifices. It came out on his trial that, by means of his rejuvenating waters, his ointments for whitening, smoothing, and invigorating the skin, his preparation for removing wrinkles, freckles, pimples, his amulets for changing sand into gold, enlarging pearls, polishing precious stones, he succeeded in realizing from these blockheads more than a hundred thousand crowns."

"Wnew !" cried Prospero, "what a master juggler the wretch was. What tricks, what contrivances, what intrigues, what marvels of prodigious prestidigitation ! And that in the centre of the greatest, most enlightened, and most civilized capitals of Europe, where there are so many ambassadors, courtiers, princes, dukes—men, in a word, well accustomed to the usages of courts, with philosophers, literati, and learned men of all kinds, fully acquainted with human malice and perversity ; . . . and all of them allowed themselves to be cheated, laughed at, duped, deluded, and led by the nose by that arrant knave !"

“And I have not told you of the schemes and plots which he put into execution in Vienna, Milan, Leipsic, Varsovia, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, all of which are cold, calculating, commercial towns, that pride themselves on despising charlatans and mountebanks, but which, nevertheless, supplied him with a number of dupes, and a still greater number of crowns. At St. Petersburg particularly he bewitched, blinded, and deceived the great nobles so monstrously that he actually plundered them. What seems the most striking and incredible is to see this man, imprisoned, shut up in the deepest dungeons, covered with chains, his neck in actual danger of the gibbet, escape his judges, slip between the fingers of his jailers, disappear, vanish like a mist or a shadow, leaving behind him extraordinary memories and a high renown, regarded in one place as a great prince and in another as a great master; here and there as a wonderful man, full of the most supernatural knowledge, and intimately connected with the most occult sciences—so blind are those who deem themselves the most wise and far-seeing. But what is most astonishing is that in a century which styles itself by excellence the most enlightened; and what seems incredible, unheard of, is that at Paris, the seat, the centre, the ark, the hearthstone of the transcendent, dazzling light of the philosophy of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Freret, Condorcet, La Mettrie, and the rest of the Encyclopedists who dispense light in streams and torrents—that at Paris, I say, Cagliostro, imprisoned in the

Bastile for the famous affair of the necklace, should contrive to blindfold his judges so completely that he came out as innocent as a dove."

"I heard nothing of that necklace affair," said Lida, "but that the diamonds of which it was composed were stolen from a jeweller."

"The jeweller was satisfied on the payment of a million francs; but it was paid by a poor prince, who fell into the snare, being made to believe that the Queen of France was dying to have that beautiful necklace, that she wished him to buy it for her, and would herself repay him the price of it, restore him to the favor which he had lost, and load him with honor and friendship. The prince, eager for royal favor, without observing all the pitfalls concealed in this labyrinth, rushed headlong into the trap, and thus lost his money, his honor, and his liberty. The queen knew nothing of the plot; the necklace disappeared; Louis XV. was very much enraged; the prince remained in his delusion; the impostors concerned in the plot brought the jewels to London; Cagliostro was arrested as an accomplice, negotiator, and instigator of the affair, and thrown into a dungeon in the Bastile."

"At last," cried the dean, "the fox was caught in the trap. If they only hold him well, that will end the tale."

"Not so fast, my friend," resumed Antonio; "the old fox escaped without even the loss of his tail. You may remember, as I mentioned before, that this charlatan, in his pilgrimages from one end of Europe to the other, assumed various names and

titles. At Cadiz, he was the Marquis Pellegrini; at Lisbon, the Marquis d'Auna; at St. Petersburg, the Marquis Balsam; at London, the Marquis Fenix. Here he was the descendant of a noble race of the purest blood in Italy; there he was a son of the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta; in another country the Princess of Trebizonde was his mother; and he knew how to speak with such assurance, to explain so correctly the family trees, genealogy, their roots, branches, illustrious and notable alliances, that the great blockheads were completely taken in, and followed him about like lambs. He put on great airs, assumed a haughty, dignified manner, a tone so majestic that the populace shielded their eyes with their hands, that they might not be dazzled. When they asked his name, he replied: '*Ego sum qui sum*' (I am who am). When the princes who came to find out the future from him insisted on knowing his name, he would draw himself up, and, seizing a pencil, draw upon the tablets a serpent, holding itself erect, bearing in its mouth an apple pierced by an arrow, saying: 'That is my name.' And the dupes believed him, and regarded him with faith, hope, awe, and veneration, such as were accorded to the prophets of the mysteries of the Pyramids, to the thaumaturgus of medicine, the diviner of the secrets of nature, the enchanter of the cataracts of the Nile, to the Sphinx, or to Agamemnon of Memphis, or to the powerful magician of the Philosopher's Stone."

"But, in God's name," said Taddei, "what had

all this trifling to do with his release from the Bastille?"

"It had a great deal to do with it. Having no good proof to give that he was not implicated in the robbery of the necklace, he gave such accounts of himself that his judges, fascinated, stupefied, argued by syllogism that a man of such high rank could not stoop to be mixed up with such fraud and robbery."

"That was taking the bird in the nest," said Prospero, laughing heartily; for he was always ready to laugh on the slightest provocation. "O the great humbug! And what did this wonderful personage tell the judges?"

"On the trial the attorney asked him, as was usual, what was his name, Christian name, age, place of birth, titles, qualities, condition, and profession. Then Cagliostro, composing his face to a suitable expression, throwing back his head, and slightly drooping his eyes, began:

"My lords and judges, I am a child of mystery; a golden mist envelops me, and an invisible hand has blotted out and erased my name. Where I was born I know not; my real name I cannot tell; I know that I am great; the blood of royalty flows in my veins; that with these earthly eyes I often behold a crown suspended over my head, and when I seek to seize it, it eludes my grasp, rises, grows luminous and brilliant, and revolves around me.

"When the first glimmer of reason dawned on my mind, I remember I was indolently reclining on a carpet of the softest grass, surrounded by Bengal



roses, my nostrils greeted by the sweet odor of the jasmine, my brow fanned by the morning breeze, gemmed with the dew of heaven, my being entranced with the song of birds, and my features reflected in a silver rivulet, winding, with a soft murmur, through the flowers, when all at once the great philosopher Altotas appeared to me. He was an old man of imposing aspect, with long, white hair falling in silver ringlets over his shoulders, and a long, white beard descending almost to his waist. Having regarded me attentively, he exclaimed :

“ ‘ Arise, thou child of high destiny ! arise, and repose upon my breast.’ ”

“ ‘ I arose and slumbered softly upon that venerable bosom—slept the sweet sleep of innocence. When I awoke I was at Medina, in Arabia Felix, at the house of Mufti Salaahym. They called me Acharat; and a black eunuch watched ever at my side. My apartments glittered with gold and silver; the walls were hung with gorgeous tapestry; my footsteps were lost in the softest and thickest of carpets; the jasper and lapis-lazuli tables were adorned with transparent vases of porcelain filled with the rarest flowers, plucked in the garden which lay beneath these luxurious apartments, at once shaded and made fragrant by the leafy screens of orange and palm trees, embellished with innumerable fountains of alabaster, whose gushing streams and glittering spray were of precious stones of a thousand colors. In that delightful retreat the divine Altotas taught me the Oriental tongues, the most profound secrets of chemistry and botany, the

hidden signification of the Pyramidean secrets ; imparted to me the treasures of ancient learning—an immeasurable ocean—of the harmonies of the heavens, of the riches of terrestrial nature, of the abysses of fire hidden in the bosom of the earth, the generators of gold and precious stones. Salaahym visited me daily, and, laying his hand upon my head, swore by his head and by his heart that I was drinking deep draughts of the wisdom and learning of Altotas ; and Altotas smiled with paternal beneficence, and the eunuchs prostrated themselves in reverence to the earth. My twelfth year came round. Salaahym threw his arms about my neck, bathed me with his tears, and, kissing my forehead, knelt before me, and cried :

“ ‘Depart, child of high destiny ! Proceed with the divine Altotas to Mecca ; there shalt thou embrace the great ones whom at Trebizonde . . .’

“ ‘I was mounted upon a dappled-gray Arab steed, Altotas on a mouse-colored charger ; the eunuchs were on my right ; the attendants followed in long lines. I journeyed to Mecca with the caravan. When I arrived it was night. A thousand mounted janissaries, followed by eunuchs in gorgeous apparel, and a countless multitude of slaves in the same superb livery and all bearing innumerable torches, illumined my way. I was placed under a canopy of crimson velvet, with draperies embroidered in diamonds. I was led beneath the majestic porico and through the precious pillars of the royal palace of the scherif.

“ ‘That prince, in his most magnificent robe of

state, awaited me at the head of the stairs. His turban bore in the centre an enormous diamond set in gold, clasping a snow-white bird of paradise ; round his neck he wore a heavy necklace of diamonds ; his arms were encircled with bands of refulgent rubies and carbuncles ; his black beard and hair were perfumed with the most costly and delicious Arabic essences. He perceived me, and, with a piercing cry, pressed me to his heart, of which I could feel the violent throbbing. He drew back, and scrutinized me ; then, holding my head between his hands, he gazed at me long and earnestly, kissed my brow and wept, as he exclaimed :

“ ‘ O Princess of Trebizonde ! . . . ’

“ ‘ Then he embraced me once more, led me to that portion of the palace nearest his own apartments, a region of rare perfumes and the most lavish magnificence of the East.

“ ‘ Three years did I remain with the scherif, who frequently, in the outpourings of his tenderness, betrayed the secret of his heart, crying :

“ ‘ Ah ! my son, my sweet child. . . . ’

“ ‘ But when Altotas, at the expiration of the third year of this entrancing existence, gave the signal for my departure, the scherif, after having prepared for me royal treasures of gold and precious stones, caused tents of the richest Indian fabrics to be prepared, which we were to pitch in the wilderness. He gave me a superb retinue of horses and camels, laden with baggage for our journey, and, having pressed me again to his heart

and heaved a profound sigh, he could no longer control the excess of his grief :

“ ‘ Farewell ! ’ he cried ; ‘ farewell, *hapless child of nature!* . . . ’

“ ‘ And fearing a further outbreak of his uncontrollable sorrow, he retired to his apartments.

“ ‘ From Mecca I was brought by the wonderful Altotas to Egypt, where I learned the occult sciences of the priests in the temple of Heliopolis, who lie buried in the underground-vaults of the necropolis, where, under the most terrible oaths of secrecy, they initiate you into the hidden sciences of hieroglyphics, that sacred, magical, and celestial tongue imparted to the obelisks, sphinxes, to the shrined mummies, to the sounding caverns of the Hypogeum. What sights I saw, what sounds I heard, in the profound horror of these nights, among the tombs of the Pharaohs, surrounded by the cenotaphs of crocodiles, of the serpent Knef, of Isis, and of the ram of Ammon ! . . .

“ ‘ And you, profane judges of the Bastile, have dared to accuse of theft a man who has penetrated the secrets of the most abstruse sciences, who is master of the *Lapis Philosophorum* (Philosopher’s Stone), the maker of pure gold, the transmuter of diamonds, rubies, emeralds. Are you not ashamed ? Do you not blush for, do you not tremble at, your daring ? . . .

“ ‘ When I left Egypt, I traversed the Desert of Sahara, stopped at the Oasis, hastened on to the river Negro, scaled the Mountains of the Moon, descended the Monomotapa, passed the Erythria ; I

journeyed over the burning sands of Arabia Deserta, till I came to India, and drank of the waters of the Ganges, and then I pressed on to Thibet, where the Grand Lama kissed my forehead, and presented me with a casket full of the richest and purest jewels of the Orient. . . . And yet, profane judges of the Bastile, it is that Acharat, who visited the Grand Lama, who brought away heaps of Golconda diamonds, that you have dared to accuse of . . . what? It is that Acharat, the son—I will at length confess it—of the Princess of Trebizonde and Scherif of Mecca, Acharat abases himself to take a miserable, potty necklace, worth a paltry million of francs! . . . Leave such degradation to a Countess de la Mothe. Such transactions are only fit for that impudent adventuress. But I . . .”

“But,” quickly interrupted the dean, who was almost beside himself—“but you, my dear Antonio, are relating a tale from the ‘Arabian Nights.’ Cagliostro, in the hands of justice, certainly did not amuse himself relating such idle tales, good, at best, to be told to peasan’s round the hearth on winter evenings.”

“Keep cool, reverend dean! Cagliostro with these idle tales so impressed the judges that they acquitted him, amid the universal p’audits of the great of the kingdom, who waited in crowds at the gates of the prison to do him honor and extol him to the skies. He greeted them with a patronizing smile, and made them a generous gift of the memorial brought before the tribunal for his defence,



which bore the effigy of the great man, with this inscription :

“ Behold the features of the friend of all !  
From the couch of pain he has raised the funeral pall,  
Has brought relief to hapless indigence :  
To be of use to man, his only recompense.”\*

“ Of use to himself and his own purse,” said d’Almavilla. “ This adventurer is a new Apollonius of Tyana. All epochs have, it seems, been fruitful in such impostors; but in an age like our own such absurdities seem indeed incredible and most astounding.”

“ Popular opinion was so strongly in his favor,” resumed Antonio, “ that Cagliostro, some time after his acquittal, being banished from the kingdom by a royal mandate, an immense multitude assembled at Passy, just outside the gates of Paris, and threatened to rise in revolt against the king. In short, the general veneration and universal esteem in which the great charlatan was held was carried so far that princes, dukes, marquises, and lords of the highest rank deemed themselves honored in being admitted to an audience with this august personage, or being allowed to hear him speak or have him at their tables. Two gentlemen of the court kept guard in turn every day at the door of his apartments, as though he were a monarch. All the furniture of his rooms was purchased at fabulous prices; pieces of his hair were

\* The sentence of acquittal pronounced by the judges of the Bastille can only be accounted for when we consider the spirit of his order, for either the Freemasons had corrupted the judges or many of them were *Masons*. If the reader laughs at Cagliostro’s jugglery, how much more at these judges who acquitted him !—THE AUTHOR.

encased in jewelled caskets; a pinch of his hair-powder was preserved as a relic; and at the place which he deigned to occupy at the table of some great lord was placed a marble tablet, *ad æternam rei memoriam*, as was usual for an emperor. His portraits, painted by the best artists, were hung in the place of honor in the apartments of the great nobles, and were multiplied by thousands of engravings; his face was engraved on precious stones to be worn on the finger; he was carved in cameo for the breast-pins and clasps of the greatest ladies; his portrait was worn in bracelets and diadems, was painted on fans, colored on handkerchiefs, embroidered in silk, sculptured in marble, moulded in plaster, carved in bronze, and—would you believe it?—statues were erected to him as to a tutelary deity, with this inscription:

“ ‘THE DIVINE CAGLIOSTRO.’ ”\*

“What!” cried the company, with one voice, “did they thus honor that great rascal? Make a divinity of a pickpocket, knave, and cheat? A worthy deity for our century, which denies God, the creator of heaven and earth, to adore a ruffian who had thousands of times so narrowly escaped the gallows!”

“However,” said the prudent and sensible Lida, “it is impossible for a man to obtain such absurd

\* At Rome, in 1848, we saw the portrait of another *immortal deity* (since dead, however), surrounded by an aureola, placed on a species of altar, with lighted tapers, at the café of the Belle Arti (Fine Arts). We saw at the door two gentlemen sentinels, and his ante-chamber filled with gentlemen and chamberlains, as though he were a crowned head.—THE AUTHOR.

and extravagant honors without some apparent reason which makes him admirable in word or action."

"That is certain," said Antonio; "and you will see, by the conclusion of my story, that you are right. But let me drink a little of this Vernaccia to moisten my throat. Prospero, give me half a glass. To your health, ladies! Good! Bravo! my dear Prospero. See how clear it is! Like molten gold! A small dose of this nectar would doubtless have had its effect in stimulating the divine Cagliostro to plead his case at the bar of the Bastile, both by assisting him in his remarkable narrative and enlivening his countenance."





## CHAPTER VIII.

### EGYPTIAN MASONRY.

LIDA very shrewdly concluded that Cagliostro must undoubtedly have had some special merit, real or imaginary, in the eyes of the multitude, by which he won such honor and glory, unbounded praise, and an almost divine veneration. We have seen that he was a man of low birth, who had never pursued serious studies, with no settled doctrines or any scientific knowledge, except what he had acquired in his early youth with the Brothers of St. John of God while in their pharmacy. He was, however, both crafty and intelligent, unscrupulous and dishonest, in a manner so subtle that, by his unbounded assurance and ready speech, he managed to delude the people and deceive and defraud them wherever he stopped ; selling the honor of his wife, or begging or stealing, seemed his principal means of support, so that, in order to escape the scaffold or the galleys, he was obliged to conceal himself, or else to assume a disguise, changing his name and appearance, and flying from place to place to elude the clutches of the law.

How could such a man, in such an age of enlightenment, in a city so progressive, among learned

men and astute philosophers, attain to such a pinnacle of greatness and of honor, which none of the crowned heads of Europe, amid the power and splendor of the throne, had ever reached? In the different cities he was attended by the great lords and princes as if he were an emperor; they took turns in filling the post of chamberlains of the ante-chamber, while favored ones guarded the door and acted as ushers, introducing to Cagliostro's presence the privileged ones to whom he condescended to grant an interview. He always secured the best apartments at the principal hotel of the metropolis, with their superb tapestry, rich carpets, and heavy curtains. He received people standing, like a monarch; whomsoever he invited to be seated might consider himself privileged on account of his high rank, genius, or some other eminent quality which entitled him to such familiarity with this great man. Cagliostro was always attired with unparalleled magnificence, in brocade, moiré, velvet embroidered with gold and pearls, and with diamond buttons; on his fingers he wore superb rings; round his neck the insignia of the orders of knighthood, of the Golden Fleece, of the Holy Ghost, of Calatrava, of the Black Eagle, with their great stars; wrought in diamonds, glittering on his breast. He drove round the streets of London, Paris, and St. Petersburg in a carriage drawn by six horses richly comparisoned, with five or six lackeys, bearing golden staffs in their hands, and wearing hats resplendent with precious stones; his coachmen, esquires, and lackeys were arrayed



in gorgeous livery ; his carriage was gilded and adorned with ostrich and heron plumes ; the coachman's seat was covered with velvet and large plates of silver bearing his arms surmounted by a crown. His wife was attired like a queen ; her jewels were of immense value, and her apparel like that of a great princess.

How, then, could this man live in such splendor and luxury in the richest cities of Europe, with so numerous a retinue, excite such wonder, and gain the confidence of princes and people ? It seemed undoubtedly a great mystery.

The mystery was simply that Cagliostro was one of the great chiefs of the secret societies which at that period prevailed in Western Europe to such an extent that even the most remote corners of Holland, Germany, England, and Russia were infected with their deadly poison. France, ever ready to take fire at nothing, now sought every means by which this flame should be extended, igniting and consuming all that came in its way ; and, to hasten the approach of the revolution prepared by the heads and promoters of infidelity, sent out her emissaries and her demagogues to rouse Italy, Switzerland, and the Electorates of the empire.

One of these dragomans was Cagliostro, who combined with infinite malice, deceit, and guile, all the artifices of an accomplished charlatan. He travelled through the principal cities of Europe, fascinating, cheating, and deluding the multitude with his wondrous tales and wild chimeras ; and it was amazing to see how he blindfolded and hood-

winked the wisest and most clear-sighted men. Therefore it followed that, the field being already prepared by the fatal doctrines of false philosophy and unbelief, Freemasonry spread rapidly wherever Cagliostro opened shop and made a trade of it.

It has not been generally observed, and yet it is worthy of note, that in the last century, although infidel philosophy was the order of the day, there yet remained in the world so much faith that the founders of this sect were obliged to cover Masonry with a religious mantle, which in our own day, though a comparatively short time has elapsed, is no longer necessary; the modern Hegemons became associated with and affiliated to Carbonarism without any other ceremony than the execrable oath, taken upon a dagger, by which they devote themselves body and soul, and in all things, to the interests of the sect.

To-day the puerile rites of Masonry are read and laughed at. The preparatory ceremonies of initiation with holy water, incense, genuflections, prostrations, and invocations of celestial and infernal names, and the mysterious *tetragrammaton*, are now subjects for mockery. All these superstitious actions were interlarded with verses from the prophets, and performed with so much gravity and solemnity that the novice might imagine himself entering some monastic charitable institution. In all these mummeries Cagliostro was such an adept that it is almost incredible how many men, otherwise well informed, prudent, enlightened, and proud of their knowledge, allowed themselves to be

duped by this great charlatan, who styled himself the foster-father of the serpent Kenef, while his wife, the other mountebank, he installed as priestess of the rights of Isis. Both wore long, trailing garments, and an entire theatrical outfit, and it was truly laughable to see them, with solemn visage, their lips compressed, their chins protruding, their hair dishevelled, their hands crossed on their breast, advance to the middle of the room, and bow down to the ground before Jehovah, or blow upon the forehead of the initiated to endow him with the spirit of wisdom from the serpent, and all of this accompanied by rolling of the eyes and distortions of the face worthy of bedlamites. And yet these very tricks, these senseless mummeries, electrified the most eminent men of London, Amsterdam, Varsovia, Paris, and Strasburg, who returned from an interview with these jugglers enthusiastic, half-crazed, and filled with the most profound veneration. Our Italian Carbonari curl their lips disdainfully at the idea of their predecessors being so absurd as to be deceived by their fooleries; but, as we shall see by the conclusion of Antonio Pizzini's narrative, Cagliostro, who possessed such a subtle knowledge of the taste and character of his times, performed all these absurd ceremonies with wonderful tact and assurance, and came from Germany, provided with no other weapons, to corrupt Italy and prepare it for the revolution.

After having taken a few mouthfuls of Vernaccia, Antonio, turning to Lida, resumed:

“Signorina, you discovered very readily that

there was a secret connected with the honors paid to Cagliostro, the ovations with which he was everywhere greeted by the multitude, and the favors heaped upon him by the nobility, and that all these things must have a hidden cause. This cause exists and is easily explained. Cagliostro gave himself out among the lower classes as a great physician, and attended the poor gratis for all their maladies. So much for the populace; and as for the nobility . . . ah! Signorina, he gave them . . . Egyptian Masonry."

"Did he really tend the poor gratis?" said Lauretta. "Are you sure of that, Signor Antonio?"

"We saw it with our own eyes at Roveredo. He came there preceded by his fame, which proclaimed him the most wonderful of physicians, the greatest that the world had ever seen since Hippocrates. . . . He took superb lodgings, and cried aloud to all comers: 'People, if ye have incurable infirmities, come hither to be treated and cured. I am the man of life, the restorer of strength, the scourge of fevers, the setter of broken bones, the healer of wounds, felons, abscesses, cancers. Come, try, and be cured!'

"On a table covered with Persian carpet lay an imposing array of batteries, lancets, pincers, forceps, scissors, blisters, and surgical instruments of all sorts, mounted in silver, gold, in enamel, ebony, or ivory, in carved and inlaid cases or boxes of red or gold-colored velvet. On stands or shelves were exhibited, as if in order of battle, an army of bottles, flagons, vials, jars, vases, and urns, filled

with spirits, tinctures, elixirs, essences, extracts, juices, amber, purple, vermilion, rose, and orange colored syrups, emitting delicate or powerful perfumes and all the Oriental aromas. All these jars, urns, and bottles were labelled : ‘ Admirable water to prolong life ’ ; ‘ Balsam of Arcalif, of which a drop takes away a year of life ’ ; ‘ Angelic distillation for beauty ’ ; ‘ Spirits which reconstruct the brain ’ ; ‘ Egyptian wine for the nerves, blood, muscles, and arteries ’ ; ‘ Elixir for the stomach, ’ and numberless astonishing advertisements, and what we might call *purse-emptiers*, to which these four lines of the *Morgante Maggiore* apply exactly :

“ ‘ Behold, O reader ! how the traitor  
With wondrous trick and falsehood came.  
His powders, balms, than which none greater,  
Could cure the hunchback, deaf, or lame. ’ ”\*

“ They apply exactly, indeed—wonderfully ! ” cried the whole company. “ Oh ! what a cheat ! . . . ”

“ All that was nothing, ” replied Antonio, “ compared to the solemn gravity with which he dispensed his universal panacea. Every morning his house became a perfect thoroughfare ; it was like the wonderful stories which old his orians tell us of the temple of Esculapius in ancient Greece. The court, the peristyles, the staircase, the en-

\* My translation of the following lines, in order to preserve the rhyme, is necessarily very free ; therefore I give the Italian version :

“ Pensa, lettore, che il traditor rassetti,  
Tut.e sue bagatelle sue bugie,  
E mandragole, o serpi, e bossoletti  
E polveri, e cartocci, e ciurmerie. ”



trance to Cagliostro's lodgings, were crowded, blocked up, with infirm people of every description; and his fame became so great that, not content with coming t'ither on crutches, with canes or sticks, they were carried in people's arms or on litters or rolling-beds, as they are seen around miraculous springs.

“Cagliostro devoted the morning hours to his gratuitous cures of the poor and humble. If some great person presented himself, he sent his excuses, adding that these precious hours were consecrated to suffering humanity, and that he must return later in the day. This announcement was made aloud by richly attired lackeys, and the people, weeping with emotion, covered him with benedictions, proclaiming him the great benefactor of the world.”

“But still,” said Giovanni Taddei, “this man must have had some scientific knowledge and talent, or his imposture would be promptly exposed.”

“How simple you are!” said Antonio. “He was a quack, and such people often succeed. But with rich people and in difficult cases he took his time—two or three months of treatment—and before the appointed term was up he raised the camp and departed, without leaving a trace behind. In every disease he acted simply in the dark, and chance or the devil favored him. In some cases he aggravated the disease, making those who came to him with some irritation of the eyes stone blind; those who were a little hard of hearing became so deaf that they could not hear the thunder. Read the

amusing little chronicle of that mad-cap Vannetti, and you will have a hearty laugh, where he relates how Cagliostro, the physician and alchemist, often made blunders which would have disgraced a blacksmith. But his reputation was made among the people; and if the cure did not meet their expectation, but had the opposite effect—if the sick person died—so much the worse for him, the simpleton: it was all his own fault—the great man could never be mistaken; and Cagliostro merely said: ‘These people are such blockheads. They take too much; they do not take enough; they took it wrong. What can I do?’ And he was right.”

“But still,” said Domenico, “he attended these people gratis?”

“Yes, he attended the lower classes *gratis et amore*; but the rich paid him, and paid him well, with fine, shining sequins. If he refused the money, he received instead costly jewels, richly-mounted watches, superb boxes, which he at first refused, and then accepted, merely as a remembrance and to oblige his grateful patient.”

“Observe the wretch’s cunning,” said the dean. “Thus it is that the world is deluded by these sharpers, while it will not deign to extend a succoring hand to the indigent poor, the widow, and the desolate orphan, who would have drawn down upon their benefactors the blessings of God.”

“I have told you one of the means,” continued Antonio, “by which Cagliostro attracted, as you have seen, the affection of the people and that of the great lords. But what gained him more credit

with nobles and men learned in natural science were certain secret artifices which seemed marvellous and, as was believed by many people, diabolical. The first of these artifices consisted in making people sleep ; and sleeping, dream ; and dreaming, see far-off or hidden things and predict future events."

"There again !" cried Prospero ; "it is possible that, dreaming, they might appear to see, hear, and feel, but not do so in reality."

"No, no, brother. They saw in good earnest strange and unusual sights. One day, Cagliostro being invited to the house of a great lord, he proposed after dinner, for the entertainment of the company, to give one of these juggling exhibitions. Having called a young girl who was employed as laundry-maid in the palace, he placed her in a large velvet arm-chair. Placing himself in front of her, he fixed his eyes upon her and began to make circles in the air, and opening, shutting, and making various movements with his hands. Then placing his two hands open, with the thumbs crossed, on the young girl's head, he looked her straight in the eyes with a fixed and motionless stare. Then, opening her fingers, he brought the palms of his hands down the girl's face, neck, and chest, along her arms, now slowly, now quickly, snapping his fingers or cracking his knuckles in the air. The young girl began to yawn, stretch, and nod ; then her eyelids drooped, and at last she fell into a sound sleep. All present began to be frightened ; Cagliostro, turning to a young marquis, said :

“ ‘ You see that the young girl is fast asleep. Well, if you are willing, she will now tell us of anything hidden which you may have about you.’ ”

“ ‘ It is utter nonsense,’ said the marquis ; ‘ but go on.’ ”

“ ‘ Nonsense ?’ said Cagliostro. ‘ Now, my fair sleeper, tell us if the noble marquis has not something on his person which he desires to conceal from every eye.’ ”

“ ‘ The spectators held their breath, and their hearts beat quickly, while they awaited her answer. The girl shuddered, muttered some words between her teeth, and said in a broken voice :

“ ‘ The marquis wears near his heart a lock of hair in a golden acorn, and it is a token from the baroness. . . . I cannot tell her name without permission from the marquis.’ ”

“ ‘ Give her permission, marquis !’ cried the company with one voice. ‘ Let her tell us. Come, fair sleeper, he consents ; tell us the name.’ ”

“ ‘ The somnambulist laughed and was silent, till the marquis approached her, and said in a low voice :

“ ‘ Whisper it in my ear.’ ”

“ ‘ The somnambulist answered in an equally low tone :

“ ‘ It is the Baroness Ernes'tine.’ ”

“ ‘ The marquis stood amazed ; then he said to the company :

“ ‘ The devil alone could know that, for no one in the world is aware of my love.’ ”

“ ‘ And thus it happened on several occasions

that Cagliostro's somnambulists prophesied future events; saw through walls; related what they saw and heard at immeasurable distances; read sealed letters that were in the depths of pockets or hidden away in cupboards; astonished men the most learned in natural science.\* But what seemed to excite the most general admiration was the affair of the *caraffa*.†

"Please tell us that," cried the young ladies, who were burning to hear all these facts, which seemed to them like fairy tales, supernatural adventures of magicians, sorcerers, or necromancers.

"This affair created a wonderful sensation, young ladies. There were apparitions of archangels, of the dead resuscitated, of distant objects brought before the eyes, written answers, a medley of all sorts of diabolical inventions."

"You frighten us, Antonio! But how did all these things happen?"

"By looking through a little bottle or flagon arranged by Cagliostro. He worked these wonders in the lodges of Egyptian Masonry, of which I must tell you more. At these places he had himself called the Grand Copt. He brought thither a little girl eight or ten years old. She was dressed in white, with a blue sash round the waist, and a scarlet one over her shoulder. He extended his hands over her head, as bishops do in ordination,

\* One might suppose that these accounts are taken from the mesmerists of our own day. You will find similar facts in the writings of the magnetizers Deluze, Rostan, Filassier, Nacquar, d'Hénin, Dupotel, Puységur, and many others who are now overrunning Italy.

† Flagon or bottle.



blew the breath of life in 'o her face, and placed her in an alcove covered with white, from which a little window gave an opening for the child's voice. This alcove contained a table, on which three tapers were burning before a bottle filled with spring water. The Grand Copt called the child Pupilla and Colomba, and, breathing in her face, he said that he was communicating to her the virtue of pure innocence which the soul would have had before the fall of Adam, and gave her the power of commanding the angelic intelligences, and particularly the seven spirits who surround the throne of God, who in the book (seized with Cagliostro by the officials of the Roman tribunal) were called Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Uriel, Zobiachel, Anachiel, Anacl.

“The child looked through the bottle, and declared that she beheld archangels and the most distant objects; that future events appeared present to her eyes. Then followed the astonishment, amazement, bewilderment, wonderment of the deluded spectators, who cried out: ‘The Prophet! Moses! the Cherubim!’ prostrating themselves before the great magician Cagliostro, so well did this sharper understand how to befool and delude the senseless multitude. He performed these same wonders in London, Venice, and the Hague; then he proceeded with his Colomba to Russia, whence he departed with a store of wealth and rich gifts, leaving behind him the nation's respect and admiration. In Leipzig he was regarded as a supernatural being, a master of occult arts. He was courted, fêted,

and loaded with gifts. He induced a number of the greatest lords to become Freemasons, showing them, through his bottle, so many wonders that they left his presence, as it were, crazed or intoxicated. It chanced that Scheffort, a leader among the Illuminati, having emphatically refused to become a Mason, Colomba saw in the bottle the exterminating angel threatening to make him pay the penalty of his refusal. And so it was ; for Scheffort, a few days after, blew out his brains with a pistol-shot which he fired into his ear. This event capped the climax of the universal terror and admiration.

“At Dantzic and Königsberg he was received and considered as the new Elias. At Mittau the visions were remarkable. Perceiving among the audience a young child, the son of an eminent personage, he placed him before the bottle, at the same time imposing his hands upon him. Immediately the boy cried out :

“ ‘ I see a beautiful garden, and a little, little child in a white dress. He grows larger. . . . Oh ! he has two wings now, blue, red, and white. His face is all shining. . . . ’

“ Then the father of the child told him : ‘ See what your sister in the country is doing.’ . . . Their villa was fifty good miles from Mittau. The child replied :

“ ‘ Ah ! yes, I see her coming down-stairs. Now she is embracing my big brother. . . . ’

“ ‘ Impossible ! ’ cried the father ; ‘ you know Rodolph is travelling in distant countries.’

“ ‘ Never mind,’ said the child, ‘ it is our own

Rodolph. I see him with my sister, who is ever so glad.'

"Then a courier was sent in great haste, who returned with the news that Rodolph had returned from abroad, and, expecting to find his father in the country, went thither.

"Nothing further was wanting to confirm the popular idea that Cagliostro was a heavenly spirit in flesh and blood; and he was venerated as a divine being, and people bent the knee and prostrated themselves before him with their foreheads to the ground. Every one desired knowledge of the future, and Cagliostro satisfied their desires, and was loaded with costly presents. Amongst those who came to him was a noble Protestant lady, who wished to know the present condition of her beloved brother, who had been cut down in the flower of his youth. Colomba saw, through the bottle, the soul of the departed, gay and joyous, and he desired her to tell his sister that he was happy."

"Most happy!" exclaimed the dean, laughing. "Imagine him in the paradise of Calvin and Luther. Oh! what a thought." \*

\* The celebrated Professor Orioli, in the first numbers of the *Album* for the year 1854, describes learnedly Cagliostro's sorcery, and declares that this affair of the bottle was precisely similar to the ancient divinations by *hydromancy*. He also speaks of other magnetic wonders, and answers obtained from *turning* and *dancing* tables. He shows how the Egyptians, Phœnicians, and Syrians made use of diabolical agency, afterwards employed by the Gnostics and Manicheans. Comparing all these facts with answers from the dead, or spiritualism, which is now astonishing North America, it is clearly proved that the devil and these charlatans, at all times and places, keep open shop for deceivers and deceived.

“The attorney-general found among Cagliostro’s papers,” continued Antonio, “some letters from lodges affiliated to Egyptian Masonry to whom he had transmitted the power of these apparitions through the bottle. One of these letters said :

“ ‘ On the twenty-fourth day of the eighth month the Grand Mistress placed a Pupilla in front of the bottle. Before he saw the angel he exclaimed : ‘ I find myself in the air in a gloomy place. I see a golden sword suspended. I behold Leatherb——g advancing. He laughs, and bids us have no uneasiness. He opens his coat and shows me a wound in his heart. He shows me a dagger. I ask him if it is the will of the Grand Copt. He answers : ‘ Most certainly.’ He also shows me a two-barrelled pistol. Help ! I see a star ; now I see two, seven ! Leatherb——g departs. I behold the seven archangels,” etc., etc. . . . The Grand Mistress was terrified. She invoked the Grand Copt, etc., etc.’

“ Upon another page was found an account of the visions, commencing thus :

“ ‘ Extract from □ \* held on Saturday, the twelfth day of the second month of the year 5558. All the Masters, except Brother Elia, were present. The operations [*i.e.*, of Pupilla] were directed by the venerable Saba II. ; and then a long, tedious account of angelic visions, questions, and answering regarding the society. After that

\* This cipher signifies a lodge.

the venerable asked the seven archangels: "Have ye further counsels or commands to give us?" Answer: "No!" The questioner: "We pray you to bless us." Answer: "I extend my hand and bless ye with all my heart." Then the brothers and sisters asked the child: "Are the angels still with you?" Answer: "Yes." "Kneel down, then, and ask them to make an act of adoration with us; recommend to their care our □.'

"Now, my dear friends," said Antonio, "in his trial at Rome, the judges having accused Cagliostro of the crimes of sorcery, magic, necromancy, and all sorts of execrable dealings with the devil, he began to exclaim and swear, and call Heaven to witness that he had nothing to do with magicians, sorcerers, or devils; that all these wonders had occurred by the will of God and the intervention of the archangels and other blessed spirits. To which it was replied that neither God nor the good angels protect the sorcery and other impieties practised in Masonry, where they renounce Jesus Christ, and hold it as their creed that heretic, Jew, Mahometan, or atheist can be saved by becoming Freemasons!

"In the trial of Cagliostro's wife she was asked if she really believed in all these wonders performed through the medium of Pupillas and Colombas. She answered yes; 'for,' said she, 'although sometimes my husband dictated to these children what they were to say, it often happened that, taken by surprise, he could not do so'; and therefore she



was assured that these visions were produced through the agency of the devil.\*

“Here, then, we have,” continued Antonio, “the second cause of the favor and admiration with which the multitude regarded Cagliostro, the astute deceiver of the miserable blinded wretches who denied Christ and believed in this impostor.”

Each of Pizzini's hearers had his own reflections to make upon the stupidity of that wicked, odious world, which believes itself so wise and crafty, and yet, in certain things which concern religion, the soul and its eternal joy, is a hundred times more stupid than a Maremmo s'leep. But the blockheads did not all disappear with those times. In our own days there still remains a fair share of them ; although many, many years have passed, and the world beholds surging, as it were, around it a thousand absurdities and a thousand iniquities, yet it allows itself to be deceived with a blindness truly pitiable. These *mesmerists*, with their wonders of electricity and animal magnetism, retail and make a trade of all manner of fooleries and childish absurdities, and the world believes, is awe-stricken, and remains in an ecstasy of admiration like rustics before a juggler's show. The table which dances a measure, the hat which bows, and the ring which moves in a glass and indiscreetly tells the ladies' ages, are in our credulous age authentic miracles, differing widely from and far

\* In the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, our Lord warns the faithful to be not deceived by such snares of the evil one.

surpassing the genuine marvels of the saints, in whom they put no faith because they were not charlatans. The evocation of the dead, and of those vagrant spirits who wander about houses, and in America make themselves heard to the tune of hard dollars, always gains credence from those who most obstinately deny the divinity of Christ. Just punishment of the blind folly of the unbelieving world, and a doctrine worthy of sin, which is the cause of all our blindness! At present everything is impregnated with these superstitions, and humble and faithful Catholics laugh at the folly of these unbelievers, and attach themselves with docile and reverent soul to the faith of the Church; whilst those who by the world are reputed wise, and who, as Dante says:

“Supinano la faccia contre Dio,”\*

often believe firmly in all sorts of absurdities, and bend the knee in wondering admiration at mummeries which a poor Catholic woman, however simple and ignorant, would reckon at their proper value and laugh at as foolish superstitions.

But to return to Pozzo, where the little company were all ears to hear the adventures of Cagliostro, who, we must admit, has never been equalled in imposture.

“And now you have the secret of our hero’s high renown,” said Antonio.

“Yes, we understand it now,” they cried with one voice.

\* Raise against God their rebellious face.

Lauretta, who was always ready to torment others in order to gratify her insatiable curiosity, now said, turning with a teasing air to Antonio :

“ Oh ! you are not done with me yet. Explain to us, I beg of you, this Egyptian Freemasonry. Are there any impenetrable mysteries connected with it ? But be careful not spin us out old wives’ tales, as one might strike sparks with the tongs from a burning log on the hearth.”

“ These are sparks, Signorina Lauretta,” replied Antonio, “ which, if they chanced to get into your eyes, would be apt to burn them severely. These facts are only too true, too bitter, too impious, and too fatal. We should have a sad experience of this if, as God forbid, these sparks were applied to the combustible matter already so unhappily well prepared in Italy ; for thence would proceed a flame which no human power could extinguish. Meanwhile, I must mention that Ma onry took such deep hold in Protestant towns that no one would believe it without authentic proofs, confirmed by Cagliostro’s avowals in presence of the Roman judges. Suffice it to say that in England, Holland, Saxony, Prussia, Moscow, and the Hanseatic cities, Cagliostro alone enrolled more than a million members within a few years ; and I can tell you they were not among the working classes, but great lords, university doctors, students of all degrees, rich merchants, prominent citizens—being all people who, having strayed from the straight road of truth by Protestant doctrines, grasped at every new branch which came in their way, mistaking it for

the tree of life; and, hungering as they were for truth, tasted of every fruit whose fair exterior made them hope to draw thence a sweet and invigorating juice; and since they no longer possessed the true and vivifying charity, they hoped that philanthropy, which they boasted was the essential element, the living soul, of Masonry, would usurp the place of Christian charity, serve as their religion, and avail them to eternal joy."

"But," interrupted Domenico, turning suddenly to the dean, "it has been said that many Catholics enrolled themselves among the Masons; now, what can they gain by it?"

"Damnation and eternal death. Oh! do you not see, my dear friends, that these unfortunate men are Catholics only in so far that they were baptized, and participated during their early youth in the grace of the sacraments, from which they were excluded, and of themselves abandoned, when they took part in the odious and iniquitous assemblies of the Masons?"

"Why do you call them iniquitous?" said Lauretta somewhat angrily. "Odious! iniquitous!—I like that; when they are, on the contrary, the light of the world, the glory of our century, the ornament of learned men, the incarnation of benevolence in generous hearts, the genius of the fine arts, the school of every virtue, the regeneration of the dotting, worm-eaten world, which had need of Masonry to rejuvenate it, to give it flesh, blood, and sinew—in a word, to restore it to life."

"O my dear signorina!" cried the dean, "do

not be heard, I pray you, spouting such nonsensical stuff; you are, of course, a good Catholic. You speak from hearsay, and are merely repeating the words of some ranting Freemason whom it has been your misfortune to meet; but in reality your fair and devout soul follows humbly in the path of our holy Church, the infallible instructress in all truth."

"What has the Church to do with this?" said Lauretta spiteful y, and reddening with anger.

"She has so much to do with it that, in 1738, Clement XII., in his bull *In Eminenti*, launched against the Freemasons excommunication incurred *ipso facto*, reserved for the Sovereign Pontiff, and from which they could not be otherwise absolved except *in articulo mortis!*\* Not content with this, the Father of the faithful, by his bull of January 14, 1739, condemned to the penalty of death all who, in his states, were enrolled among the Freemasons, as being *pernicious persons, strongly suspected of heresy and sedition.*"

"Pardon me, but that seems cruel and tyrannical." And so saying, Lauretta glanced at her father, who sat perfectly silent, uncomfortable, and constrained, his eyes fixed upon his glass of wine, and not seeming to relish much this sally of the dean's.

"You make light, then, of the fact, Signorina Lauretta," said the dean somewhat sharply, "that Masonry is reeking with heresy and sedition? Mere trifles, doubtless? Benedict XIV. was not,

\* At the article of death.



however, of your opinion ; for in 1750, seeing so many foreign lords who, tormented by their conscience, had come to kneel at his feet, desiring by the indulgence of the Jubilee to be released from both the temporal and eternal punishment, and imploring, with great sorrow and abundant tears, their absolution from the sentence of excommunication incurred by the bull of his predecessor, he, with most justifiable zeal, in the constitution *Providus Romanorum Pontificum*, dated May 18, 1751, ratified the decree excommunicating all who should thereafter become Freemasons."

"You see," said Antonio ; "and yet the Voltairean philosophers themselves declared, in speaking of Benedict XIV., that he was the wisest and most learned pontiff who ever wore the tiara. That Masonry is imbued with heresy, we see by the statements of Cagliostro, since in its rites and ceremonies, as in its fundamental principles, it is not only proved to be heretical and schismatic, but Manichean, and in every sense of the word impious and atheistical ; and that sedition is stirred up in their councils who can doubt, when we see France entirely revolutionized, felons usurping the highest authority, laws disregarded, statutes obsolete, justice dead, the nobility dispersed, the clergy led to martyrdom, the churches pillaged and profaned, and King Louis a captive, with the scaffold in prospective ? Cagliostro himself, during the course of his trial, declared on several occasions that in the lodges of London, the Hague, Berlin, Mittau, Königsberg, and Frankfort the ultimate

end proposed was 'not only to exterminate all religions from the world, but also to overthrow every throne in Europe, beginning with that of France and ending with that of Rome; also, that Rome was to be the target at which the darts of the sects should be aimed, and, in order to attain their end, the Italian States should be subverted, their princes banished, and they made popular republics.'

"Clement XII. penetrated all the evil designs of Masonry, struck it with anathema, and condemned to death every Mason who ventured to raise his head in Rome. The Palatine elector had anticipated his condemnation by proclaiming at Manheim, in 1737, a severe inquisition and sentence of death against Freemasons; at Vienna, in 1743, the same punishment was declared against all who should dare to enroll themselves as members of the lodges; Spain and Naples, in 1751, passed the most rigid laws against them; Milan, in 1757, declared it a capital offence to become a Mason; the Duke of Bavaria, in the years 1784 and 1785, condemned them to the gallows; and likewise Genoa, Venice, Ragusa, and the senate of Savoy made all who enrolled themselves in the Masonic Order, if they escaped with their heads, liable to fines and other severe penalties."

"All a sham!" cried Prospero. "Heaven guard us from falling into such snares! Certainly to lose one's soul, one's head, and to be condemned to the gallows, would be too much of a good thing for any one. And yet how does it happen that in every city of Italy there are more lodges than churches?"

“Because,” returned Antonio (let us whisper it to believing ears)—“because they make these princes believe that these Masonic lodges are merely club-rooms or academies of learning, and little less than shrines where they go to obtain pardon and plenary indulgences. But believe me, Prospero, if the Italian lords would play the lodges the same trick that the Grand Sultan of Turkey meant to play them, this plague, which threatens to destroy the world, would not make such havoc among us.”

“And what was this trick?” said the dean.

“Oh! a truly Turkish joke. He wanted to set fire to the lodges when the whole force should be assembled there, and in 1748, being informed that a Frenchman, who had been banished from Venice as a swindler, had opened in the house of the English interpreter at Constantinople a Masonic lodge, gave orders to the pasha commandant to set fire to the house and burn it to the ground. The other offenders escaped, and did not suffer themselves to be caught; but the Frenchman was taken to the frontiers, and at the same time a notice sent to the ambassadors of the Christian powers that they should warn their sovereigns to guard against this traitor.”

“Good!” cried Domenico. “The Turks were wiser than the Christian princes just then; for the latter permit these basilisks to hatch their eggs under the very beds where they sleep in heedless security. So Cagliostro had, therefore, many co-operators in his work of founding this sect?”

“Of course he had. He affiliated his wife and

himself to the London lodges; but having discovered a manuscript of George Cofton, wherein he saw mention of certain rights and ceremonies, he founded upon them his Egyptian Masonry, which gained him much renown as well as incredible wealth, which actually poured in upon him from all sides. And *hoc erat in votis*—this should have satisfied all his desires. But he was not content with men: the covetous fellow established a lodge for ladies, who made such pretty little Masons; they loaded him with gold, and were useful to him in every way, since each of them was herself an apostle; they attracted men to it by their charms as multitudes of birds are caught by nets and snares.”

“Yet Weishaupt, in his ‘Illuminatism,’ did not wish to have any women in the society,” interrupted the dean. “Cagliostro was clearer-sighted than the sectarian of Ingolstadt.”

“No doubt,” replied Antonio, “the former did not wish to have women, for fear of having the secret betrayed. The latter wished to admit women, because they gave him more money; and besides he knew, as regards sectarian affairs, women are as silent as the grave.”

“Well,” said Lauretta, glancing furtively at her father, “what were the rites of Egyptian Masonry? Do you know them? And if there really is a secret, how was it discovered?”

“Oh!” replied Antonio, “Cagliostro, in the clutches of the law, chattered like a magpie. His Egyptian rites were a mixture of things sa-

cred and profane, serious and ridiculous, stupid and crafty, which served to bewilder and almost craze his disciples. He gave them to understand that the end of Egyptian Masonry was to lead to perfection through moral and physical regeneration; to bring them back to the primal matter or philosopher's stone, which renews in man the strength of the most vigorous youth and renders him immortal—in a word, to give them a Pentagon which would restore man to his state of primitive innocence."

"What stuff!" exclaimed every one. "What rubbish! What a medley!"

"Have patience, my dear friends. Egyptian Masonry, according to Cagliostro, was founded by Henoeh, renewed by Elias, and finally revived and made over by the Grand Copt. The Grand Copt was on an equality with the Eternal Tetragrammaton, and in the initiation mystery the venerable said: 'By the power which I hold from the Grand Copt, founder of our order, and by the grace of God, I confer upon you the grade of membership, and constitute you guardian of the new knowledge of which we are now about to make you the recipient, in the sacred names of Helion, Melion, and Tetragrammaton.' And in the women's lodge, amongst other fooleries, they said, blowing in their faces: 'I breathe thus upon thee, that the truth which we possess may penetrate into and flourish in thy heart; that thy spiritual part may be strengthened; that thou mayest be confirmed in the faith of thy brethren and sisters.



We create thee a true daughter of the veritable Egyptian adoration and of Lodge ——.’”

“Ah! the audacious wretch,” cried Lida, who could not contain herself. “O my God! thy chastisements must overtake this impostor. Oh! to see how he dares to usurp the office of the bishops; he breathes the spirit of Satan, confirms in the grace of the devil. Could the Church of God be more vilely counterfeited?”

“Do you not know, signorina,” said the dean, “that in most things the Illuminati aped the Church? They had baptism, confirmation, sacrifices, dogmas, liturgies, and ceremonials which were neither more nor less than those of the immaculate Spouse of God, the mistress of faith, our holy mother, the Church—with this difference, however: that the Church in all her works is animated by Jesus Christ, and for the honor and glory of the Redeemer of men; and the Masons, on the contrary, were inspired by the devil, worked for and with the devil, who is leading them to eternal perdition.”

“All these things are facts,” continued Antonio, “as you see in the consecration of vestments and emblems of Egyptian Masonry, performed through the Pupilla or Colomba before mentioned. In the initiation of women the Pupilla was called upon by the venerable to summon one of the seven angels, and demand of him if it would be permitted to raise the black veil with which the aspirant was covered. The angel having answered in the affirmative, the grand master ordered Pupilla to evoke

the other six angels, to whom she spoke thus: 'By the power which the Grand Copt has conferred on my mistress, and by that which I hold from her and through my innocence, I bid ye, primitive angels, consecrate these ornaments.'

"Among these ornaments is the famous belt, on which is inscribed 'Union, Silence, Virtue,' and which the initiated was to wear during the first night.\*

"The form of the oath was as follows: In the presence of the Great Architect of the universe, I promise to perform all that may be commanded by my superiors. I promise, under the penalties known to my superiors, *to obey them blindly*, without ever questioning the motives of their commands; never to betray by words, signs, or gestures, nor in writing, any of the mysteries confided to me."

"By my faith," cried Prospero, swallowing a little glass of Vernaccia, "I would rather become

\* A document, whose contents were communicated to me, was found at Rome. It enumerates the ritual objects used in Egyptian Masonry, which were burned by sentence of the law:

"It is certain that (of the aforesaid Cagliostro), in the street or square of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, the public executioner delivered to the flames the following articles:

"I. Divers scrolls, ornamented with emblems of the sect, all having vacant spaces, in which the memoirs of the aspirants for membership could be inscribed.

"II. Silken aprons, with both edges elegantly embroidered.

"III. Similar articles of silk, adorned with various figures.

"IV. Gloves of white or different colored skins.

"V. A long shoulder-band of azure blue.

"VI. A purple band, hung with golden coins forming a circle.

"VII. Two swords, and a book entitled 'Maçonnerie Egyptienne. Rome, May 14, 1791.'"

a Trappist than a Freemason. Such liberty, such obedience ! If I failed in the rule of the monks, I would have to take my dinner on my knees or under the prior's table ; but these priors of the Freemasons have penalties to their own taste. What do you say, Count d'Almavilla ?”

“ Oh ! . . . certainly . . . although . . . you are quite right . . . the oaths are grand, terrible . . . and the penalties imposed are . . . well—”

“ The most gen'le,” said Taddei—“ merely a dose of arsenic or morphine in the soup, or a little prick with a very small poniard which would pierce one's heart with no greater pain than that of dying instantly without having need of priest or doctor. You see it is these mild punishments, so worthy of philanthropists, which animate the noble breast of a Freemason.”

“ You spoke some time ago, Signor Antonio,” said Lauretta, “ of the Pentagon, which restores primal innocence and confers immortality ; in what does the Egyptian Pentagon consist ?”

“ Really, you wish to penetrate into the deepest and most hidden of Cagliostro's mysteries. I will satisfy you. He had certain secret chambers, one of which he called Sinai : there he performed the hidden rites of Masonry ; the other room was Ararat, in which rested the Ark, and symbolized the rest reserved alone for the Masons elect of God ; and he said :

“ “ After some days of prayer, libation, consecration, and exorcism, the masters began to communicate with the primitive angels to know the

seal and cipher of each of these immortal spirits. Both were impressed on a virgin page of the skin of a lamb dead-born, or ordinary paper, blessed by the founder. After forty days each one received for himself the Pentagon, which was in reality this virgin page, upon which the angels had impressed their cipher and seal, and in virtue of which body and soul would be purified ; the spirit would then regain its original innocence, and the body recover youth and immortality. This physical regeneration lasts five thousand five hundred and fifty-one years, and death would then be replaced by a gentle sleep, during which the soul would be translated to heaven.' ”

“ So much the better,” said Lida, glancing mischievously at Lauretta. “ So much the better ! In this way the Freemasons relieve the grave-diggers, and save them the trouble of burying them. If all the world would become Freemasons, then farewell to physicians and physics ; plenty of work for the cooks ; but if every one were to live for all eternity, how could the earth, air, and water produce all the fruit, fishes, and birds required for these immortal dinners ? ” \*

“ Antonio,” said Prospero, “ your Cagliostro must have found very few to believe in his imposture. He must have taken these great lords and doctors for fools, if he hoped that they would have faith in such absurdities.”

\* This story of the Pentagon may be read in Cagliostro's trial. Like the story of the necklace, I have refrained from giving it, because it is related at length and with all the details in the history of the trial.

“ You are mistaken, brother, entirely mistaken. Cagliostro had so many adepts, especially at London, St. Petersburg, and the Hague, that it seems almost incredible. He knew so well how to sell this novelty that these magnates rushed headlong into the snare like blackbirds, and bought from him the least grain of *primal regenerating matter* at the cost of a hatful of sequins ; and by such means he bore them up to the highest heavens, and for them the Grand Copt was father, master, angel, and God. So true is this that in a field between Basel and Strasburg there still remains a Chinese temple, built by Cagliostro for the performance of the rites of Egyptian Masonry. It was furnished and adorned with the greatest splendor, tapestry, brocade, and cloth of gold, so that they were like imperial apartments, instead of a vile and seditious meeting-place for vagabonds ; and the furniture was so costly and elegant, the temple was so brilliantly illuminated at night, on the walls there was such a display of rare paintings, the floors were so beautifully inlaid with ebony, ivory, sandal and log wood, with bands and lines of golden bronze at the squares and divisions, that the country people admired it from afar like an enchanted palace, the abode of immortal spirits. Within this temple they performed the rites which resulted in physical and moral regeneration ; man entered there infirm, feeble, and imbecile, and came forth sound and vigorous, with no fear of death to come.”

“ How much money he must have had ! ” said Domenico.



“So much,” replied Antonio, “that his lodge and his Sinai of Lyons was a marvel of splendor; neither the King of France nor the Emperor of Germany could boast such superb and regal appointments. This was the lodge of solemn meetings, called the Lodge of the Primate, or Mother-Lodge; his certificates and other documents bore the legend, ‘Glory, Wisdom, Union, Benevolence, and Prosperity!—We, Grand Oopt, founder and grand master of the high Egyptian Masonry in all the eastern and western portions of the globe, etc., create, in perpetuity, at the Grand Orient of Lyons, the present Egyptian Lodge ——, and accord to its officers the right and power to accept apprentices, companions, and master Egyptian Masons, to send out certificates, to hold communication with all the Masons of our rite, etc.,’ and ended with the seal and signature of Cagliostro; but in a corner, at the bottom of the certificate, was a cross with three letters, ‘L. P. D.,’ which no one could interpret; but Cagliostro, when confined in the Castle of San Angelo, confessed that it was the motto of the sect, and signified *Lilium pedibus destrue.*”

“Ah! the wretches,” said Giovanni; “we see that their object was the destruction of monarchy.”

“In his trial at the Bastille did not Cagliostro prophesy that the Bastille would be levelled to its foundations, and where its walls and fortifications then arose would be a passage or avenue for the Parisians? You see they have lately prepared the Revolution and dreamed of a republic in place

of a monarchy! Cagliostro even admitted that in Frankfort-on-Main two unknown persons presented themselves to him, led him into a garden and among a thick cluster of trees, thence through a subterranean passage into a dark cave. There, in the middle of it, he said, was a table, upon which was an iron chest; within this were a number of books, and amongst them was one in missal form which began thus: 'We, grand masters of the Templars . . .' Then followed the formula of a terrible oath to destroy every monarchy; and this oath was written in blood, and signed also with blood by eleven grand masters of the Illuminati of Weishaupt. This book was written in French, and it was there recorded that their project was first to subvert France, then Italy, and in particular Rome. The society had a great deal of money in the banks of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, London, Genoa, Venice; and as every member paid five *louis-d'or* a year, and the organization consisted of one hundred and eighty thousand Masons, this served to support their emissaries at all the courts. There are, between those of America and Europe, twenty thousand lodges, each one of which sends, on St. John's day, twenty-five *louis-d'or* to the general bank."

"A mere nothing!" said Fanny, counting, in lady's fashion, on her fingers—"only five hundred thousand *louis* which these poor Masons bank every year; making in all more than twelve millions of francs, spent for the holy pleasure of causing the downfall of kings, overthrowing the

Papacy, and uprooting from the earth the worship of the Lord.”

“Ah!” said the dean, “it is my turn to quote the Holy Scriptures, and therefore I will add the words of the Redeemer, who said: ‘The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.’ But mark well, signorina, what a sum of money hell can send forth to destroy the peace of the world and ruin souls purchased by the blood of Jesus. And observe, besides, that the ten millions of Illuminati do not furnish one-tenth of what the other secret societies squander for this diabolical purpose; for, if we add to this the collections of the High Masonry, Rosicrucians, Scotch Brethren, London Devils, the Holy Alliance, the Magnetics, and a hundred other sects, it amounts to a fortune which many empires do not possess, and which these secret societies use in covering the world with their nets! It is, however, clear that Cagliostro was one of the powerful instruments of which they made use to corrupt the people, and we see, in the time during which this impostor was among us at Roveredo, how many lords, drawn thither from distant countries, under pretext of being doctored by him, became Masons. I now understand the cause of Cagliostro’s wealth and all the honors with which he was loaded.”

“Suffice it to know,” said Antonio, “that in his trial he confessed to the Roman judges that the number of his adepts was more than a million! That was a mania for becoming members of a sect!”

“It seems to me an evident sign,” resumed the dean, “that faith is growing weaker amongst Christians, and God punishes them by the law of retaliation ; so that those who throw off the light burden and sweet yoke of Christ voluntarily assume the harsh yoke of the devil, which costs them so dear, and imposes upon them servitude, constraint, and shackles, as if they were wild beasts of the forest. If any among these unfortunates would escape from this hard slavery, the poison or the knife takes vengeance on them. Listen, my young friends. I am older than any of you ; but if you are still living forty years from now, you will see almost the whole of Europe undermined by these secret societies, disturbed and plunged into the deepest misery. Even now we see France shaken to its centre by a bloody rebellion, and Italy hastening towards like disasters ; and if Italy revolts, believe me, it will be long before she can be restored to peace, and will have to pass through a sea of blood before she regains her former condition.”

“Oh ! you are a bird of evil omen,” said Prospero, drinking a little wine. “Let this wine be the preacher’s alms. This wine, I venture to say, would rejuvenate one far better than the Pentagon of Cagliostro.”



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE TWINS.

OVER the lawn of a most charming villa, situated on the smiling slopes of Chieri, two little children were proceeding quietly towards a clump of cornel and lentisk trees. The boy was about twelve years old, and his twin-sister had such a sweet and gentle face that she seemed like a little angel from Paradise. Her complexion was of milk and roses, her little figure delicately and slightly formed, and her fingers so long and slender, so white and transparent, that one could almost see through them. Her light-brown hair fell in ringlets on her shoulders, and in her childish frolics through the meadow they danced in graceful confusion on her shoulders, or divided into two great masses, like the children in pictures of Correggio and Albani. She had large, well-opened eyes, in which the black pupils lay softly in the clear white like the flax-flower; their expression was frank and open, the smile of innocence, mingled with that fearless candor which animates the features of childhood; but the slow and gentle motion of the eyes, the modesty of their timid glances drooping at a stranger's notice, gave evi-



dence that they were indeed the mirror of a pure and affectionate little soul, already accustomed to elevate itself frequently to the heights of divine love and the holy fear of God, that cultivated her heart and inclined her mind towards the eternal beatitude, of which the very thought filled her with heavenly sweetness.

Her brother was about medium height, and as straight and well proportioned as his sister, with a flexible and symmetrical figure, but nervous and robust ; his shoulders were broad, his neck strong and firm, his limbs well formed and muscular, and full of the restlessness of youth and strength. His hair, brushed back from his forehead, curled around the ears and at the back of his head, and was cut short in the Henry IV. style. His black eyes were large and fearless, and never drooped, except before the gentle and serious glance of his sister, who exercised a wonderful influence over him with that mysterious power which, proceeding from reverence, causes the bravest hearts to bend before weakness and gentleness. The sturdy boy was, when with his sister, like a large dog who sports and frisks around his master, but at the very raising of a finger, commanding him to desist, he crouches, docile and caressing, at his master's feet. These two dear children were, as the reader may have already guessed, Ubaldo and Irene, who had accompanied their mother to the country.

Chieri is a pretty little town, situated on the extreme verge of Monferrato, about ten miles east of Turin. Its position is delightful, on the slope of

one of several little elevations, which descend gradually from Superga till they are merged in the immense plains watered by the river Po. These fertile plains extend through the beautiful and productive regions of Carmagnola, Carignano, and Villanova, as far as the Langhe. From about the close of the twelfth century to the fourteenth this town was a popular republic, with the government principally in the hands of various noble and powerful houses, whose names are still honored in Piedmont—as, for instance, those of Boschetti, Balbiani, Bertoni, Bensi, Broglia, and Balbo, which latter sustained a great loss in Cæsare, who was taken off by a premature death. There are still to be seen at Chieri the remains of its ancient grandeur in its palaces and towers, which make it conspicuous from afar, and are now, by the touch of modern improvement, that destroys where it would embellish, despoiled of the charm of the gray and rugged aspect of its ancient stones.

But what renders Chieri the gem of Piedmont is the beauty of its site, the delightful character of the valleys, the fruitfulness of the fields, its graceful slopes, the gay and smiling aspect of the hills enlivened with palaces, villas, and dwellings surrounded by lawns and gardens. Here the color of the trees, grass, and verdure is clearer and brighter than elsewhere; and, altogether, such a fair and radiant expanse stretches in all directions that when man, especially in the month of May, comes thither to this broad plain or level land upon the little mountain of Pino, and beholds opening before

his eyes a marvellous panorama of hills, dales, meadows, fields, and green and flowering vales, he is filled with an infinite delight. Perhaps there are few other places in Italy (though it contains many beautiful ones) that can compare to this luxuriant region, upon which a smiling Heaven looks down lovingly, over which a clear, pure air blows caressingly, and which is covered with every species of grain, vines, vegetables, and delicious fruits, incredibly beautiful in color and fragrance.

On the crest of one of the acclivities of these hills was a villa of the Marquis di San Roberto, where his son with his family usually spent the spring months; so when the count, as we have seen, set out with Laretta and Lida for his trip through Venice and Lombardy, Virginia came thither with her children, Ubaldo and Irene, who enjoyed themselves extremely in the pure air and sweet freedom of the fields.

Therefore, while the Count d'Almavilla was enjoying the kind and courteous hospitality of his Tyrolese friends, Virginia was surrounded by purer and sweeter pleasures of her own, because she was happy in being able to employ this brief respite of freedom in acts of piety, that she had been compelled to restrain within her heart, during all these long years, under the tyrannical rule of her eccentric, irreligious, and discourteous husband, affable and pleasant to every one but his wife, whose angelic sweetness he repaid by outrageous cruelty.

He had, however, seen the evil effects which a careless and impious education had wrought in his

eldest daughter, and, if not himself made better, was at least convinced that, if piety is not early instilled into the minds of children, it is not to be hoped that the passions, left unrestrained in infancy and childhood, can be restrained in youth, when the vivacity of spirits, the ardor of the blood, the impulse of the imagination, the spur of the awakened senses, of the heart overflowing with love, hope, pleasure, and full of ungoverned desires, make it almost impossible to arrest youth on the downward slope of vice, which he descends with the irresistible violence of a tempest or whirlwind. These considerations induced d'Almavilla to resolve on following the example of many fathers themselves, of indifferent morals and no religion, who confide the education of their children to the care of wise and religious men, that they might not see them grow up to be immoral and impious youths, the terror and disgrace of their families and of society. Therefore he entrusted to Virginia the early education of the twins, telling her that he would, in proper time, give Ubaldo learned and accomplished masters.

He did not speak to deaf ears, but the pious lady, without displaying extraordinary solicitude, lest she might reawaken her husband's opposition, had no other thought but that of bringing her children up in the holy fear of God, and with all those virtues which would render them both gentle and pleasing and solidly grounded in good. The long solitude in which she had passed her weary and bitter days had become, when spent with her dear children, far

sweeter, more pleasing and delightful, to her than all the gay festivities of the court and ambassadors ; her children were always with her, and she had a manner at once so affectionate and dignified that the little creatures loved and revered her with all their hearts.

She did not weary them with long sermons, but preached to them by example ; for whatever they saw their mother do, they did also. When she went to kneel in her oratory, the children knelt down on each side of her, joined their little hands, and gazed with bright yet timid glances at the Madonna before whom their mother was praying ; and even before they knew how to pray themselves they made all the outward signs of reverence and devotion, raising their hands to the holy image, bowing their heads, and with posture and expression so reverent and serious that they might seem to be in deep meditation. In the morning Irene called Baldino, and they went down to the garden with Julia to cull two little bouquets, one for Baldo and one for herself. Then they went in, kissed their mother's hand, said good-morning to her, and asked if they might offer their flowers to the Blessed Virgin in two little vases ; and she brought them into the oratory, where, with their hands resting on her knees, they lisped their morning prayers, which they always ended with a Hail Mary for their good papa and Laretta. All this filled Virginia's heart with inexpressible joy.

When they were only six or seven years old, they knew all the little catechism ; their mother gave



them their lessons, and whichever succeeded best received some candy or sweetmeats, or some early fruit, adding the sweeter and higher reward of their mother's kiss. And when Irene, who was calmer, more serious, and far more attentive, knew her lesson better and received the prize, she ran to share it with Ubaldo, who was nevertheless grieved because he had not received his mother's kiss. Then Irene would give him two herself, and run to beg mamma to embrace Baldino, promising for him that next day he would know better than ever the holy mysteries of faith, the commandments, and works of mercy. Then she made him recite them, until he knew them without a mistake, so that he might have the prize next day.

When at Christmas the twins went, according to custom, to spend the holidays with their grandfather at the castle of San Roberto, they listened with delight to the carols of the village children. For at that time, in the towns and villages of Italy, it was still the custom for the youths or children of the place to go round to the doors of the wealthy citizens, from Christmas Eve to the Epiphany, singing the shepherds' hymn or the carol of the Magi to some simple pastoral air, accompanying themselves on the harpsichord or mandolin, and receiving from the children of the house red apples, winter pears, chestnuts, almonds, or walnuts.

Every evening Ubaldo and Irene went down to the house of the farmer, where the village children came by turns to sing first the beautiful hymn :

“ With hearts truly grateful,  
Come, all ye faithful,” etc.

For New Year’s they sang :

“ Jesus, name most sweet,  
Comfort of our hearts.”

Then, at the Epiphany, the young singers sang in their sweet voices the story of the star :

“ We are the kings three,  
From the East come we,  
To adore Jesus, our God,” etc.

The village carpenter and the locksmith usually sang the bass, while the shrill voices of the children sang the soprano and contralto parts.

The twins had gifts of fruit prepared for each band, and often added pieces of silver, to the great delight of the singers.

At that time another custom prevailed : on the vigil of the Epiphany the lord of the country sent to each family a horn full of blessed incense, which the master of the house burned in a little vase, so that it perfumed all the rooms.

Ubaldo and Irene asked from their grandfather some grains of incense to burn before their crib, which had beautiful wax figures, and mountains, fields, woods, fountains, and the flocks browsing around the stable, where lay the divine Infant in the manger between the ox and the ass. All these Catholic customs made the people familiar with the most august mysteries of our redemption, rejoiced their hearts, reanimated their faith, and made religion the companion, friend, and loving and tender mother of the people, while conversing thus familiar-

ly with them. Now these usages have disappeared from our old Italy; and we who have passed our fiftieth year are among the last who, in our youth, enjoyed these hal'owed pleasures. They have left us a sweet remembrance and a lively regret to see them taken from us by a cruel philosophy which seemed to envy Italy such happiness.\*

Virginia herself related to her children the lives of the saints, but strictly forbade the servants to tell them of ghós's, phantoms, or anything which savored of superstition or of witches, hobgoblins, or demons; she took care to choose the traits of the virtues of the youthful saints, and particularly the martyrs, so as to increase their faith and their love of God, and to form in them a great, noble, and generous heart, strong to bear contradictions, and brave in resisting the intemperance of childhood. She taught them to bear pain patiently, and if they were hurt, cut, or bruised in their sports or frolics, accustomed them to endure the slight suffering without tears or complaints. She was delighted when they listened with eager interest to the answers of St. Agnes, St. Pancratius, and other youthful martyrs, who, in presence of their tyrants,

\*The monks who, under the guidance of Augustine, were sent by Gregory the Great to evangelize England and Germany, introduced in these places the representation of the Mysteries, in order to conform themselves to the ignorance of these new Christians; these dramas took the place, with them, of pious books or meditation, and sustained their faith. But, in the course of time, many abuses crept in in some grosser countries, as they will among gross and ignorant people; but these abuses did not change the Christian belief or prove their wickedness, which Sir Walter Scott takes such delight in pointing out and confounding with the most august dogmas, which in his novels he mocks at as idolatrous, or worse.

confessed Jesus Christ, boldly and bravely, fearless of the terrible ordeal of martyrdom—flames or the wild beasts.

Irene always had various questions to ask her mother: If these young saints were not afraid to be left alone in those dark, hideous prisons? and how they could bear the weight of those iron fetters? and if they did not tremble at the horrible faces of their jailers? and if the fire really burned them? “O mamma! think of those lions and tigers and bears, with their big teeth, great red eyes, and terrible claws. Oh! I almost imagine I hear t’em roar.”

“Oh!” cried Ubaldo, “I would have killed them with my lance and sword. I would have plunged my lance into the executioners. Those poor martyrs—to kill them like that. Mamma, I hate those people, they make me so angry.”

“My son,” said Virginia, “the Christians suffered insult, shame, and torments for the love of Jesus; and if they had become angry and taken vengeance, they would not now be honored by the Church as martyrs. If you wish to imitate them, you must become mild and gentle; for instance, when you get angry with Julia and kick Momo you offend our Lord.”

“But did the saints never feel angry?” said Ubaldo.

“They may certainly have felt angry,” answered the mother, “and perhaps more even than you, for they were neither more nor less than children like yourselves; but they knew how to subdue and

control themselves. My dear Ubaldo, if you begin at once to govern your temper, believe me, the Blessed Virgin will have you for her child. Oh! yes; these children, whose martyrdom I have read for you, found it sweet to pardon those who injured them."

"But my Uncle Gustavo told me that when I am big, if any one insults me, I must fight him in a duel."

"Your uncle was joking, my dear child. A Christian gentleman defends himself when attacked; but he is ready to pardon all offences. Do you remember the beautiful story of St. John Gualberto? When I told you how the murderer of his brother fell into his hands and could not fly, and when St. John was about to strike, he gave him his life because he crossed his arms upon his breast, and besought him for the love of Jesus to have mercy on him, did you not cry *Bravo*?"

"That is true, mamma. I remember very well; and by that beautiful act he became a saint."

"And I want you, my boy, to become a saint, because God created us all for that end."

"Me a saint, mamma? No! it is too hard. There are few saints now. In the calendar there is only one for each day, and there is no room for more; we were born too late."

"Ah! little goose, it is not necessary, in order to be a saint, that your name be inscribed in the calendar; we must only endeavor to have it engraved on the golden book of the Lord. Do you not know that there have been many millions of saints?"



“ Are they all on our altars ? ”

“ They are all in heaven. On our altars there are only a small number, whom God has willed should celebrate his glory in the Church militant ; but those who, conforming their lives to the law of Christ, are saved at their death, are all saints.”

“ Oh ! now I understand : I have only to save myself and I will be a saint. But how are people saved ? It is difficult, dear mamma ; I remember you read me one day in the Gospel that the gate was small and narrow ; and then—then—well, how are people saved ? Now that I am small, I could stoop down so low and creep in on my hands and feet.”

The Countess Virginia laughed outright at this childish fancy of getting to heaven on all-fours, but she said :

“ Baldino, I will show you and Ena to-day that it is not after all so hard to climb the narrow path which leads to heaven.”

After dinner they went out, and, passing through the woods near the castle, Virginia brought them into a miserable, straw-thatched *lovel*, where there was a peasant family who earned their scanty sustenance by working in the fields. A peasant woman, about twenty-five years old, sat in a straight-backed chair, in a dingy, smoky room, which was both wretched and dirty ; paralysis had shrunken all her limbs, and her fingers were twisted and contracted in a fearful manner ; her knees were pressed so close together that the blade of a knife could hardly be inserted between them, and her feet were

so distorted by excruciating pains that they seemed almost like a horse's hoofs.

She was a good-looking young woman, with a clear white and red complexion, and bright, merry black eyes; long, wavy hair fell over her shoulders like a golden shower, and made a graceful frame for her head and face. At her side was a little girl, mounted on a stool, giving her something to drink, or some food when she felt inclined to eat.

When the countess and her children entered, the young invalid blushed deeply, shook back her hair, and bowed respectfully.

"How are you, Rosina?" said Virginia kindly. "To tell the truth, it is a long time since I have seen you, but there have been ever so many things to prevent me from coming. Have you had any ease from your pains?"

"Signora," replied Rosina, smiling a gentle, pleasing smile, "they have settled in my joints, and move round like people making themselves at home."

"But they are unreasonable, I must say, to come so often and stay so long."

"Oh! by no means, signora. This poor house of my body belongs to the Lord, who may lodge therein whom he thinks best, for these sufferings are the obedient servants of that great Master, and faithfully accomplish his will; therefore they are always welcome. Jesus, the Son of God, himself willingly admitted them to every portion of his sacred Body; and they were the first to take possession when he was born in the manger of Beth-

lehem, but especially in his Passion, when they penetrated every pore and muscle and fibre. In the Crucifixion they entered by holes made by the cruel nails, took lodging in his strained nerves, in his wrenched and dislocated joints. Fearful sufferings have passed from every bone and artery and each sacred limb of Christ into mine; is it not a great honor for me? Ah! signora, unless we suffer with Jesus, how can we hope to rejoice with him in the eternal joys of heaven?"

"But you are so young, my poor Rosina, to be thus nailed to a bench as motionless as the trunk of a tree, having to be fed like a little bird; it seems to me that it must be a great trial for you. Do you never feel a longing to see the sun, to enjoy the green fields, to walk in the country, to go to the harvestings and vine feasts?"

"Yes, signora; the longing comes to me, and sometimes the wish becomes so great, the desire so strong, that I actually force myself from this miserable bench. But then I reflect: Was not Jesus nailed to the cross? Did he descend from it? No! Did he not drain to the dregs the cup of his Passion? Yes! Then if Jesus, for the love of me, remained fastened to the cross till he died, it is my duty to endure bravely, and to suffer willingly, a little for the love of him. It is so sweet to help him to carry his cross!"\*

\* If Giacomo Leopardi had, in all his sufferings, tasted one single drop of the heavenly consolation which the thought of sufferings borne for Christ gives to man, he would, instead of despairing, have been filled with hope, and, instead of bating, have been most loving! His life, tormented by bodily infirmi-

The countess glanced at her children. They were weeping with pity and emotion. To console them, she begged Rosina to sing her little hymn of the "Immaculate Conception." She sang it with deep feeling, in a clear, true voice, and with such a happy, peaceful expression of face that one would have supposed her the happiest creature in the world. The countess gave her some little gifts, and, on going out into the garden with her children, she said :

"You see, my dear children, how easily people may be happy in this world by loving our Lord sincerely. Fear him, love him, and your soul will be always at peace amid the trials of life."

Thus did Virginia bring up in so gentle a fashion her dear twins ; thus they grew up pure and innocent, consoling the maternal heart each day by little traits which delighted her ; as, for example, on Saturdays she would see that they had placed before the image of Mary, upon the little altar of her oratory, a beautiful pear, a little bunch of cherries, or a red and fragrant apple, the tokens of little mortifications which these two good children offered to the Madonna and afterwards gave to the poor, having deprived themselves of these things at breakfast or lunch.

There was an old man (already more than eighty

ties, would have been blessed by the ineffable peace which gives joy to simple and fervent souls, even in the midst of misfortune. But the unhappy man suffered without consolation, and his books frightened and depressed the patient and humble of heart. How many ignorant, foolish people possess that blessed philosophy, unknown to and hidden from the proud of heart !

years of age, and forced by a swelling on his foot to walk on crutches) who, having been in his youth on a pilgrimage to Loretto, always wore on his hat a medal of Our Lady; there was also a little old blind woman whom they called *La Menica*, who was always so clean, and her white hair so neatly arranged, that it was a pleasure to see her. The countess always made these two poor people have their dinner at the castle, and desired that *Ubaldo* and *Irene* should serve them lovingly at the table. It was a beautiful sight to see *Ubaldo*, plate in hand, standing like a servant behind old *Gaetano's* chair, pouring out water for him, and giving him for his dessert the fruit he had first offered to the *Madonna*! Each time that the child changed his plate and filled his glass the old man took his hand and kissed it respectfully. When *Irene* heard *La Menica* coming up the stairs, she hastened to meet her, and, taking the place of her little niece who always led her, brought her into the dining-hall, placed her at the table, put a napkin before her, cut her meat, broke her bread, gave her a drink, and, when dinner was over, filled her basket with large slices of meat, besides bread, fruit, and some little delicacies. And when *Menica* could come no more to the castle on account of her infirmities, *Virginia* sent the two children with *Julia* to bring her her dinner, to make her bed, and keep her company. *Menica* wept with joy, thanked them with the deepest gratitude, and promised to pray fervently to the Blessed Virgin for them.

During their stay at the villa, *Virginia* had cho-



sen as their confessor a Barnabite father, who was a learned and devout man, mild and prudent, experienced in the guidance of souls. Seeing the innocence of these two children, he grew to love them dearly, and guided them, therefore, with so much tenderness that these young souls advanced happily in the arduous path of virtue, purifying themselves ever more and more, and becoming mutually inflamed with the living and burning fire of divine love ; so that their wise direc'or, though they were still of tender age, believed that they had so much sense, and were so far advanced in the knowledge of God, that he spoke to their good mother about admitting them to their First Communion, that they might thus taste the sweetness of that heavenly table, and the delight of the joys of Paradise.

This proposal caused Virginia the greatest delight ; she burned with a holy impatience to see them take their places at the heavenly banquet, feeling assured that the contact with the Immaculate Body of the Divine Lamb would increase the purity and candor of these souls already so pure.

At this news the children were almost wild with joy and happiness, and thought of nothing else but a worthy preparation for so solemn and sublime an act. The saintly Barnabite came frequently to the castle to instruct them ; Virginia made them repeat to her these sacred lessons, and sometimes she took them to Chieri, and climbed with them the rugged steep to the monastery where dwelt the religious, so that they might converse with their

gentle master. They read at this time the "Novena of the Sacred Heart" of Borgo, and the "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament" of Lanzi, and the angelic Alphonsus Liguori, with unspeakable gladness of heart, and the lives of those saints who were most enamored of the Blessed Sacrament; they heard with eager delight how the angels gave communion with their own hands to St. Stanislaus Kostka, and how St. Aloysius consumed himself in ecstasies of love; they asked their mother to bring them to the Sana Palace, where the young St. Aloysius lived with his uncle, and to that little room where he, as it were, annihilated his soul before God; they knelt down, kissing the ground and walls which had contained this angel of love.

But the lives of the martyrs increased their ardor. The countess told them the history of the persecutions practised against the Christians of Japan, and how these valiant warriors of the cross reanimated their courage by frequent communions. Ubaldo, inflamed with zeal, declared that he would go to Japan to plant there anew the banner of the faith. He had long conversations on the subject with Irene, discussing all his childish plans with such gayety that it would seem as if he were already embarked on the Spanish galleys, to sail towards the Philippine Islands, and thence along the Japanese shore.

One night Virginia, before retiring to her bedroom, went, according to her custom, into Ubaldo's little room to see if he were asleep, and if Julia had covered him properly; he was not in bed. His

mother, alarmed, looked round the room, calling him in a low voice ; she saw him at last in a corner, between two chairs, fast asleep. She shook him, saying :

“ What are you doing ? What whim is this ? Get up and go to your bed.”

Ubaldo raised his sleepy face to his mother, and, smiling, said :

“ Mamma, the missionaries of whom you told us last night slept among the rigging of the ships, and on the bare ground in woods or caverns. Ought I not accustom myself to sleep on the ground, if I want to convert the Japanese ?”

“ Well, go to bed meanwhile,” said his mother ; and taking him by the hand, she raised him from the floor, and, putting him in his bed, kissed him, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead ; then she left the room deeply moved.

As we said at the beginning of the chapter, the two children often proceeded to the little grove of cornel and lentisk trees. They went there every day at a certain hour unperceived ; for their mother, justly confiding in their goodness, left them entirely free to amuse themselves as they pleased and run about in the garden. Having discovered, in this little grove, shaded by a great tree, a cave in the form of a cabin, they made therein a little hermitage, where they came to say their prayers, in imitation of those who prayed in their garden, like St. Catherine of Sienna or St. Rose of Lima. All children love to imitate whatever they see or hear, be it good or bad ; and perhaps many of

those who, having unhappily entered the secret societies, are now the terror of Italy, when recalling their childhood, may perhaps remember that, like Ubaldo, they once made altars, walked in processions, and performed various works of advanced piety, even going so far as to use the discipline or sleep upon the boards. I often wonder that these men, burdened with so many crimes, can live seemingly happy, careless, and perfectly secure; but God, perchance, rewards them upon the earth for the good actions done in the innocence of their hearts, in the sweet time of their childhood.\*

\*We ourselves knew some who were our pupils, and have had the misfortune to stray away; ah! may it chance that this book may fall into their hands and remind them of their early years. Who knows but that sweet remembrance of their childhood may bring them back to the better path?





## CHAPTER X.

### CELINA.

THIS hermitage of the twins was in a spot skirting the edge of the wood, that just here almost touched the wall of the enclosure, and one day, as the children were sitting on a green and mossy bank in silent prayer, they heard all at once some one singing sacred songs in French, with such a beautiful, pure, and harmonious voice, thrilling and expressive, that they listened breathlessly. But almost immediately the hymns ceased, and instead they could hear cries, mingled with insulting laughs and the sound of an angry altercation. The children arose, and, running to a grated door in the wall which give a view of the country without, they saw a little peasant girl of about twelve or thirteen years, who was giving pasture, on the shore that ran without the walls, to a fine dappled heifer, and holding in her hand the end of a rope ; and whilst she was thus singing sweetly in French, two rude peasant boys, about eleven or twelve years old, happened to pass, stopped at first to make fun of the shepherdess, and then began to pelt her with lumps of earth and acorns. Seeing this, Ubaldo shouted angrily to the two vagabonds to



desist ; but they did not heed him, and, snatching from the little girl's hand the cord which was fastened to the heifer's horn, they pricked it with brambles, and, having set it running down towards the shore, they took to their heels.

The poor child, fearing that her beast would fall down the ravine, ran along the shore like a deer, and, endeavoring to follow it, her dress caught in a thick shrub which grew on a rock, and she remained suspended in the air. In vain did she seek, by struggling with her feet and hands, to find a point of support. She began to cry in great alarm, and to call for assistance ; but the ravine was so solitary and so thickly choked with shrubbery that her voice was lost and did not reach the fields where it might be heard by the peasants. Irene, too, began to weep piteously ; but Ubaldo, like a brave and generous boy, without loss of time, began to climb up the gratings of the door. Having reached the top, he saw that, without hurting himself severely on its iron spikes, he could not get over it ; then he swung himself on to a pillar, and, climbing it, let himself down on the outside of the wall, and placing his foot in one notch and then another of the stone, and holding on with both hands to a projection, dropped to the ground with great force ; then, rising to his feet, his face and hands covered with earth, he ran to the little shepherdess.

Having reached the branch where she hung, the boy, not being strong enough to sustain the peasant girl's weight, and after having made futile

efforts to release her dress, thought of another means. Sliding down the ravine, and coming as near as he could to the little girl, he told her to place her feet on his shoulders, and, supporting herself thus, she could raise herself to her full height, and release her dress from the bramble. It is needless to say how lightly she jumped from Ubaldo's shoulders, and with what grace of manner she thanked him for his brave and courteous action. Seeing that her heifer had returned to the field, and was browsing tranquilly on the green grass, the little peasant took Ubaldo by the two hands, and helped him on to the bank, and then brought him as far as the grated door.

Irene clapped her hands for joy, and exulted in her brother's heroic action.

Having come to the lattice, Ubaldo said to his sister :

“Ena dear, how am I going to get in? I managed to get over the wall, but to climb it again is more than I dare attempt; the notches are too high and I could not reach them with my hands.” Then Irene answered: “Never mind; I will run and tell mamma, and she will make Tiburzio open the grating.” And she ran off, but Ubaldo called her back, saying in a low voice: “Make them bring those cakes which we put by, and, if you can, add a couple of francs to them; that will please her, for she seems to be very poor.”

Irene ran off toward the palace. Then Ubaldo, sitting down on a large stone, asked the shepherdess;

“What is your name?”

“Celina,” answered the girl, blushing slightly.

“But you sang a French hymn to the Blessed Virgin, as if you knew that language, and still it is not your own.”

“Yes, signor, pardon me, it is my own language,” said the peasant girl; and Ubaldo asked again:

“Then your family are here?”

“No, signor; I am only a little girl hired to take care of this heifer.”

“And where did you come from? From Savoy or Aosta, where French is spoken?”

Celina cast down her eyes, blushed deeply, and was silent; two great tears glittered in her eyes.

But Ubaldo, full of the liveliest curiosity, put many other questions to her: whence she came? who she was? what was her family name? had she a father and mother? how did she come to Piedmont? why she took care of cattle? could she do anything else? and a hundred other such questions as curious children always ask.

Celina drew out of her pocket a small handkerchief of fine linen, patched and mended, but one corner of which still bore a piece of Flanders point, with which it had once been edged round, and began to wipe her eyes. Ubaldo then perceived on it an embroidered cipher or initial surmounted by a ducal coronet with chains of gold; but he was too much of a child to understand what this meant, and, still curious, continued his questions:

“Oh! tell me, please, where you came from?”

“Young gentleman, I am French, born at Grenoble, and I came here to escape the revolution.”

“Then,” replied Ubaldo, “you are the daughter of an *émigré*; but how did you come to be a servant to peasants?”\*

Just then Virginia, who was anxious about Ubaldo, appeared, accompanied by Irene and the gardener, to have the grating opened and bring him back to the castle. As soon as Ubaldo perceived his mother, he arose and ran towards the grating, which was now open, kissed her hand, and, standing on tip-toe, whispered in her ear:

“Do you know, mamma, this shepherdess does not belong to this country? She says she is French, and will not answer any of my questions; then she weeps and tells me that minding cattle was not always her condition.” Meanwhile, Irene had gone over to the little girl with a basket of fruit and cakes, and some money wrapped carefully in a piece of paper, praying her to accept this little present for her own and Ubaldo’s sake.

Virginia looked attentively at the young girl,

\* It is almost needless to say to our readers that in his youth the author knew several of these French *émigrés*; he heard from their own lips many particulars of the cruelties practised by the fiercest Jacobins in the National Assembly; that he saw many ladies and gentlemen hidden in the Alps under the costumes of peasants; that he visited there several of the most prominent noblemen of La Vendée; and that he often saw the Villa of Gazzola, where King Louis XVIII. lived so long under the name of Count de Lille. At home he often heard them speak of French *émigrés* who remained at Verona, at the court of the exiled King of France, and he remembers often having went over touching anecdotes of them which his father used to relate. He made use, too, of the dreadful accounts published in German, at Vienna, about this time. He also drew from contemporary histories.

and discovered in her a grace and distinction contrasting oddly with her poor attire. Taking her aside, she asked her :

“ What is your name, my child ? ”

“ Madame, my real name is Antoinette ; but here they call me Celina.”

“ Why, you bear the name of the virtuous and unfortunate Queen of France,” said Virginia, “ and you are French, my dear. But what is the matter ? Why do you cry ? ” And as she spoke she pressed her hand in both of hers with affectionate familiarity. The child’s hand trembled.

“ The queen’s name makes you weep and tremble. Why is this ? ”

“ Because she is the most unhappy lady in the world,” answered Antoinette, “ and I love her beyond all expression ! Oh ! how much I love her. How the thought of her afflicts and distresses me ! And the poor Princess of France, and the Dauphin—O lady ! what is to become of those two lovable and unhappy children, who are so good, and were so kind to me ? ”

“ My child,” said Virginia, more and more surprised by these simple and affecting words—“ my child, how does it happen that you, a child of the people, should know so intimately the princess and the Dauphin, the children of France, whom only the great nobles of the court and the most intimate attendants of the king and queen can approach ? ”

“ Ah ! madame,” said the young girl with timid grace, “ you know the princes are so good, so



gracious, so clement, that they condescend most kindly to their inferiors, and treat them like equals; they make them as dear companions, and admit them with the greatest goodness to a share in all their sports and occupations. You see me now very poor, madame, and yet these royal children spent long hours with me in the gardens of Saint-Cloud and Versailles; we sported together in the long, shaded avenues among the groves and around the streams of Fontainebleau, and I was nearly always with them. The Dauphin made me gather flowers and fragrant leaves, of which he and the princess formed bouquets to present to the queen. I chased with them the butterfly, and they showed the rarest, most brilliant ones, with golden wings, to the king, while the Dauphin described to his royal father all the trouble and the long runs which I had to have before I could catch them; and the king admired and returned them to me with many kind caresses. Often in the jousting field the Dauphin would mount a wooden horse which was attached to the gate, while I would turn him round quickly, and he, while turning, would throw the lance and javelin through the hanging rings, and seldom missed his aim, while the princess and I would run to pick up his arrows; but he was so agile, and the horse turned so fast, that he often stopped and picked up the arrows himself before we could reach them, he was so quick and easy in his movements. You will not be astonished, madame, when I tell you that the Dauphin, young as he was, was unequalled in strength, agility, and

suppleness; he was like a strong and graceful stag; he could bend like a willow, and climb or leap like a squirrel. At the gymnasium he performed wonders—leaped bars, climbed posts, swung on knotted cords, hung by one hand. He could run on stilts, tumble in the circus, turn with wheels and seize the ring fastened to the ball, raise himself and remain there by the mere strength of his muscle, hanging thus in a horizontal position till his wrists swelled, his arms became livid, his hair stood on end, and his cheeks grew so white that I cried in terror: ‘Enough, my lord, enough! Stop, I beg of you!’ And he, always kind and gentle, turning a somersault, would land on the soft grass, smiling at our fears. But his greatest pleasure was to use his little gun, which he loaded himself, and then drew the trigger. If a little bird perched on the branch of a tree, he would sign to us to be still; then, approaching softly, take aim, fire, and the bird was dead! I cannot tell you how delighted he used to be when his valet, Jeannet, brought it to him still palpitating. He would then run to show it to the princess and myself, holding it by the wings, and keep it to present to the king, who, at dinner, would send it back to him on a little gold plate; but the Dauphin would not eat it himself, but always offered it to the princess.

“We had also two large dogs, like lions, which he never wanted Jeannet to harness to his little carriage that they drew up and down the avenue as if they were horses. He preferred to harness them

himself, and then, making his sister and I get into the carriage, and mounting the box, he cracked his whip, and drove them like an accomplished coachman. He could make them gallop, and started them off at full speed; or he could draw them up short, make them fall into an easy trot or amble. And all the time he enjoyed our pleasure. O my prince! how beautiful you were then. How gracious and how merry! How well those two fine dogs obeyed the rein held by that gentle yet firm hand which was to guide the high destinies of the kingdom of France!

“And what is this destiny now? How the joy of that handsome face is changed into bitterness! How that brilliant light is lost in darkness! Madame, he now pines in the Temple, and, though scarcely ten years old, he has all the feelings of a manly heart, for misfortune elevates noble minds, and teaches them to suffer. I know full well how he suffers. I was told by a person who had seen the king and queen in that horrible prison, into which she had obtained entrance under various disguises, sometimes as a shoemaker, sometimes as a carpenter, now a washwoman, and again a jailer. As long as the king and queen, in all their misery, and under the guard of ruffians who were of the scum of the people, had their beloved children with them, the very sight of them softened the horrors of their dreadful condition; but when those ferocious brutes snatched them from the maternal arms, to cast them into damp, stifling, and filthy cells, the sufferings of the royal family

passed human endurance and became intolerable. That charming young girl, so amiable and so beloved, was given into the hands of wretches who treated her as they would not have dared to treat the child of a tavern servant; and the Dauphin was given to a wicked, malicious cobbler, who made him wax the thread, dress the leather, and do all the roughest and hardest work; and the wretch often kicked him, threw the moulds at his head, and the dirty water, in which the leather had been soaked, in his face; or sometimes made him take a mouthful of glue, which caused him to vomit. O madame! does it not make your heart bleed to hear of such atrocities practised on these innocent ones? Do they not fill you with horror? Oh! if I could take their place, I would suffer willingly, knowing they were free. I could then prove at least a portion of the affection I bear them for their goodness and gentleness towards me. Oh! I tell you, madame, I offer to God all the pain that I feel at seeing myself reduced to the care of cattle; I offer it to him, humbly beseeching him to grant a respite to these royal prisoners, who pine amid such torments."

Poor Antoinette had put so much fire and passion into her story that it had been impossible for Virginia to interrupt her, to ask who she was, and how she had been reduced to her present condition, where were her parents, and if they had been at the court of France. She seized the moment when Antoinette stopped, her voice choked by sobs, and embracing her warmly, said:

“Dear child, you were not born to labor ; it was not through chance that you played with those royal children in the gardens of palaces. You must be the child of one of the first ladies of the court. Speak ! Open your heart to me. I am a mother ; I can understand you, and it will give me great happiness if I can in any degree console you.”

Just as Antoinette, drying her tears, was about to reply, a voice from behind the shrubbery called her : “Celina ! Celina ! where are you ?” And a young peasant girl ascended with wonderful speed the slope leading to the castle. Having come as far as the grating, she saluted the countess, and, throwing her arms round Antoinette’s neck, said, breathless from her long run :

“You have not heard : our uncle has sent us word . . . that, by a special favor of the Blessed Virgin, he can finally fly from France and escape death. He hopes, whenever it may be, to see us again.”

This young girl seemed about eighteen years of age. She wore a broad straw hat, of which the leaves, turned up with rose-colored taffeta, drooped on the sides ; a blue satin ribbon encircled it, and, fastened at the back, fell in two long ends over her shoulders. She wore a short skirt of white piqué, and a little waist of striped blue stuff, with a white muslin handkerchief at her neck, and a green apron, with dots, such as is worn by the Piedmontese peasants. This rustic garb poorly disguised the young girl’s elegant and distinguished bearing, for the lofty sentiments of her heart were betrayed



by her looks, movements, manners, and in fact her whole air and carriage. Her face was modest and composed; she had extremely delicate features, fine expressive eyes, and a high, calm forehead; her smile was pure and gentle; and altogether at the first glance any one would recognize something great, and yet sweet and benign, which plainly said: These peasant garments ill-conceal a lady of the highest rank, her air of distinction increased by the humble costume, as a sunbeam, hidden for a moment by a light cloud, comes out of it brighter and more dazzling.

The invigorating air of the fields had not bronzed her skin, which, however, bore the rosy hue of health; but her out-door life had given her a firmer step and a bearing in which were no traces of the languor of cities. Her voice seemed to have gained a clear, silvery tone, and spoke directly to the heart, with mingled authority and sweetness, which attracted towards her tenderness, compassion, and respect.

Antoinette, at the first sight of her, cast down her eyes, composed herself, and, raising her head, advanced towards her with an air at once affectionate and respectful, and threw herself into her arms, crying:

“ Ah ! Clotilde. . . . ”



## CHAPTER XI.

### CLOTILDE.

WE have now reached a point in our story when we feel it incumbent upon us to make some reflections upon the nature of the events we are about to relate. Let us, then, consider the Revolution which, begun in France, already threatened to subvert Italy and change the destiny of the whole of Europe, while we endeavor to determine its fundamental causes.

The kingdom of France had been, for a considerable time, convulsed by internal wars and the intrigues of the Huguenots, who sought the downfall of all institutions, human and divine, so much so that, at one period, every city in France took part in the struggle then raging between the loyal adherents of the Catholic faith and those who violently assailed it. Therefore it came about that, though the Catholics, through the valor of Henry of Navarre, obtained a vast ascendancy over the Huguenots or Calvinists, yet in the parliaments, courts of justice, and in the army great disaffection still prevailed, and boded ill for the progress of civil and religious affairs in the kingdom. The Huguenots were supported by the Jansenists, a

wicked and perverse sect, deadly enemies of the Church and throne, who, crafty hypocrites as they were, under the mantle of austere virtue made every effort to shake the foundations of regal authority, while feigning to be its warmest advocates and upholders ; all their efforts were, of course, calculated to rouse the people to revolt against monarchy.

To the Jansenists were added the philosophers, who, seeing the reins given to private judgment by the Calvinists, threw off en irely the mask of Christian virtue with which the Jansenists covered themselves, and cried aloud that Christianity was a worn out thing ; that human nature should be free from every law ; that God created it independent ; that the knowledge of the Great Being who reigns in heaven suffices for its happiness ; that it has therefore no need of the Redemption by Christ, of the authority of the Church, nor of ecclesiastical law, because reason is the mistress and queen of the world. Voltaire, the leader of this cohort of unbelievers, who inundated France with a deluge of impious and blasphemous books, couched his infernal doctrines in a style at once so brilliant, graceful, and seductive that his books were passed from hand to hand through all the cities and country districts, crossing the Rhine on the German side, and the Alps on the Italian frontiers, so that Germany and the Italian States were perverted with incalculable rapidity ; the lessons taught therein were that every pleasure was permitted to man, that there was no hell to be feared in the life to come, and that in this present life there was no

authority which had the right to restrain the passions.

These new doctrines began to work especially among people of high rank, whose wealth placed every pleasure within their reach, among men of letters, and those of the lower classes through their desire to elevate themselves and rival the great; all these people seized blindly and eagerly upon this idea of liberty, and dug beneath their own feet the abyss which was to engulf them in utter ruin. Yet still the strength and wisdom of the laws watched vigilantly over the maintenance of authority and respect for civil and ecclesiastical law, so that they might not succeed in striking a deadly blow at human society; hence these disciples of infidelity congregated in secret, that they might thus securely conspire against kings and national institutions, to overthrow the one and undermine the other, and called themselves Freemasons. Meanwhile, in Germany, the sect of the Illuminati crept silent and venomous, having been created, preserved, and strengthened by the vilest and most impious enemies of God and man; as, for instance, the Bavarian Weisshaupt, whose sworn object was to exterminate every form of religion from the earth, to raise man to the level of the Deity, by freeing him from every restraint which could lead him to virtue or hinder him from vice.

This deadly element introduced into Masonry was the spark which enkindled the awful flame of the French Revolution, and has ever since been, to

the present time, the bane and evil genius of the entire universe. In the dark recesses of these secret, mysterious societies was distilled the poison which, pervading human breasts, filled them with bitter hatred for all that was holy, noble, or venerable. Thence they came forth with their cry of "Liberty! Equality!" to murder priests and nobles, to pillage palaces, dismantle castles, burn harvests, level forests, devastate fields; their hapless victims, hunted, persecuted, and martyred with every species of torment, the descendants of the noblest families, the honor and glory of the throne and of this the bravest and most invincible nation of the earth, under the name of aristocrats, banished from the realm.

Even the hardest heart must be touched by the accounts of the atrocities committed in those days. All the nobles who could be seized were cast into the deepest dungeons, and thence dragged forth to execution; their torments were such that death was welcomed as the end of a miserable existence. Children were killed before their parents' eyes, their hearts torn from their bosoms and offered, still palpitating, to their hapless mothers, and the bloody entrails of new-born children thrown in their mothers' faces. The daughters of the noblest houses were insulted in presence of their shuddering fathers and brothers; poor little infants were taken by the feet, their heads dashed against the wall, and their mutilated bodies thrown into the lap of their anguish-stricken mothers, who thus endured the horrors of a thousand deaths. The nobles who



did not perish in the prisons were dragged through the streets amid the howls and imprecations of the furious and degraded multitude, and were hung to the windows of their own palaces, strang'ed with the ribbon of their own orders of knighthood, or beheaded at the guillotine ; again, they were piled in heaps and thrown into the river, or placed before the cannon's mouth and blown to pieces. The nobler and richer they were, the greater their guilt. The princes of the blood, dukes, marquises, counts, viscounts, were thrown alive into troughs of boiling water, and afterwards made into sausages, with a sign, "Salted aristocrats a penny a pound" ; others being flayed, their skin was made into paper, of which was formed the books of the National Assembly, or the parchment on which the lists of the proscribed were written ; again, their skin was tanned like the hide of beasts, and made into waistcoats or knee-breeches, which were worn by the tigers of the Convention. The tanneries for human skin were advertised in the journals of Marat, Pethion, Danton, and Brissot, and the prices fixed. The skin of a marshal of France sold for so much ; that of a great baron of the crown, so much ; that of a maid of honor, so much. A pair of gloves made from the skin of a marchioness sold for a *louis d'or* ; if they were of the skin of a duchess, they were worth thirty francs. Tri-colored ribbons were also made from human skin, and paraded by these monsters at the tribunals where they came to harangue the populace and incite them to hunt down aristocrats and drag them

before the judgment-seat of the Assembly. Then these infamous wretches rushed forth like bloodhounds, hunting priests and nobles in the mountains of Vivarais, among the Pyrenees or the Cévennes, in the Alps or the Jura; they tracked them in the woods, in the caverns of the valleys, in almost inaccessible gorges, and threw them from the highest peaks down into the streams which flowed at the bottom of precipices, or into the deep crevasses of glaciers. When they could not overtake them, they set dogs upon their track and shot them down without mercy. The poor fugitives fell stricken among the brushwood, or, covered with blood, fell dead in attempting to continue their flight, or lingered whole days in the agony of a slow death, exposed to the piercing cold of the atmosphere, without nourishment, with no human aid, enduring the most dreadful sufferings, till at length they died and became the prey of wolves, eagles, or vultures.

Still, they at least, after a shorter or longer term of suffering, found in death a release from their misery; but others, who succeeded in escaping to Germany, Spain, England, or Italy, were often compelled to undergo the severest trials. Families of the highest nobility, who had been possessed of immense wealth, accustomed to the splendor of courts, to the grandeur of their castles, the luxury of their Parisian palaces, the pleasures of their beautiful villas; to be surrounded by a numerous household, and in the enjoyment of all the comforts of life—horses, carriages, splendid dinners,

brilliant entertainments—where they were loved and revered by their friends and acquaintances, were now abandoned by all, on foot, without money, without bread, unknown, pursued, in constant fear of falling into the hands of their cruel persecutors. The ladies of the first families, who had passed all their lives in perfumed chambers, treading on the softest of carpets, dressed in the most delicate garments, were now wanderers among bleak mountains, unsheltered, scantily clad, their feet bare and bleeding, followed by their weeping family, all trembling with cold, exhausted, and dying of hunger. Often, when they came to some poor hut and asked for hospitality, they were grudgingly given a miserable crust or a wisp of straw on which to pass the night. Numbers of noble maidens, the pride and joy of their parents, betrothed to the noble lords of the first houses of the kingdom, now wandered among the mountains of unknown regions, poor, dejected, pursued by a hopeless love and by the sweet phantoms of youth, keenly sensible of the anguish which filled their mothers' hearts, the danger to which their fathers were exposed, the horrible fate which might at any moment overtake their fondly-cherished lovers, who would be beheaded, martyred by a blood-thirsty populace, or left to pine in horrible dungeons, sepulchres in which they were buried alive. Most of the noble ladies had exchanged their splendid attire for the coarsest garments, in order to save their lives or their honor, and concealed themselves in the cabins of shepherds among the most

rugged of the Alps, leading there a rustic life, bringing the flocks to pasture, under the eye of God and their good angel, who protected them amid so many dangers, and gave them the strength and courage to endure their misfortunes. We have known more than one who passed several years, apart from all the world, in the high mountains of Tarantasia, Bornand, Monginevra, and Sempione. Clad in a brown drugget gown, wrapped in a coarse serge cloak, their heads protected by a broad felt hat, they led their flocks from height to height, from peak to peak, from rock to rock, reading their little prayer-book, raising their hearts to God, begging him to have pity on France, on her fugitive parents and friends. How many solitary tears, which God counted one by one; how many sighs and laments from desolate hearts, born for noble emotions, brought up in sentiments of compassion for human misery, who in their own country had so often relieved the misfortunes of others, and now, unfortunate themselves, poor and unknown, they were a sublime spectacle in the sight of Heaven, which poured down upon them the holy dew of grace and mercy! But to return to our story.

The beautiful Clotilde having observed that the Countess d'Almavilla listened attentively to little Antoinette, and shed tears of compassion, she gracefully kissed her hand and thanked her for the kindness she had shown her sister.

“Ah! then this dear little girl is your sister?” said Virginia, much moved. “How does it happen

that you are here in such humble garb, and at work in the fields? You do not give one the impression of a peasant, and your sister told me so many details of the royal family of France that it is evident she is well accustomed to court life."

"Madame," replied Clotilde, "my sister is a god daughter of the queen; that is why she bears her name. My godmother is the Princess Clotilde of France, wife of Charles Emanuel of Savoy, hereditary sovereign of your kingdom of Sardinia; but we are orphans, exiled, poor, wandering, exposed to many injurious suspicions which everywhere pursue us. I dare not have disclosed our secret to you, but that I behold in your noble countenance the piety and goodness of your heart. You are a mother, madame; you will compassionate our excessive misery."

Virginia looked fixedly at the young peasant. Meanwhile, Irene, seeing that Antoinette, whilst her sister spoke, hid her face in her apron, approached her gently, and, having embraced her, uncovered her face, and wiping away her tears, said:

"Do not be afraid; our Lord is so good to every one! He is the father of the afflicted and unfortunate, and assuredly he will have compassion on your sorrow."

Virginia, recovering herself, said suddenly to Clotilde:

"You have not answered me. You must not be afraid; I will do all in my power to serve you and assist you in the sad position in which the



Revolution has placed you. The farm where you have found shelter belongs to me. I will not longer allow you to lead so laborious a life in this alien land, for it is certain you were not born to the labor of the fields; and if you find it too painful to tell me who you are, be at least certain that your sorrows have found an echo in a heart which has been long inured to suffering and can compassionate it. I am the Countess d'Almavilla, and these are my children, whom I have taught to take pity on the misfortunes of others, and, as far as they can, to relieve them."

At these kind words Clotilde, reassured, replied :

"Madame, you see before you two victims of the Revolution who escaped the massacres of the 10th of August and the 2d of September through a miracle of the mercy of God, who confided us to the care of our good angel, and placed us under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. The people of Paris, incited first by Mirabeau, and urged on by the furious ravings of Marat and the Jacobins, who were so much more cruel than the former, were roused to fury against the nobility and clergy, declaring them the sworn enemies of liberty and equality, in the name of which they subverted the whole kingdom of France. Their rage became so great that, breaking through every breach or barrier, they rushed through the streets with such fury that the whole history of human strife shows no parallel case. When people no longer fear the Lord, there is no human or divine restraint upon their actions, and rude and brutal

natures rush into an excess of diabolical cruelty which surpasses the ferocity of the fiercest and most savage beasts who dwell in forest caverns. The massacre of nobles and priests in Paris and the other towns of the kingdom is incredible ; and the time will come when Italy will consider all this as a tissue of falsehoods, unless she herself has the misfortune to fall into impiety ; then she will know the horrors of infidelity let loose against her nobility, her temples, and her ministers of God.

“ My father was a relative of the Prince de Lamballe, the husband of the unfortunate Marie Thérèse Louise, that gentle and faithful friend of Queen Marie Antoinette, whom they tore from her when she, with the king, was imprisoned in the tower of the Temple, and cast her into a dreadful dungeon. The princess, whom I called my aunt, was loaded with chains, as if she were a wild beast, and thrown into a cell with neither light nor air, her bed a heap of dung thrown on the filthy floor of the place, which was dug under the bed of the Seine ; here she was buried alive, and passed days of anguish far more horrible than death.

“ My father, attached to the king with the most tender devotion, in spite of the massacre of aristocrats, would not consent to leave Paris. He sent my mother, brother, and Antoinette to Grenoble, and kept me with him in Paris, where we took very humble lodgings in the family of an old servant, who lived in one of the dingiest streets of the city. My father spent his days and nights in futile efforts for the safety of the king, conferring secretly with

the partisans of Louis XVI.—Tronchet, De Sèze, and especially Malesherbes—animating them to sustain courageously, in presence of the monsters of the Assembly, the innocence of the saintly king. My poor father all this time mourned the fate of his cousin, the Princess de Lamballe. One evening he pressed my hand affectionately, and said :

“ ‘ Clotilde, is your courage equal to an attempt to see your aunt ? It will console her, and you can bring her a little money and tidings of the royal family and of our own. It will be a great pleasure to her. You are young, courageous, and discreet ; and your good angel will certainly assist you in this work of charity.’ ”

“ I did not even hesitate. I disguised myself as a fruit pedlar, bought two baskets of fruit, and walked up and down before the prison called *La Force*, offering at the lowest price the finest apples and the largest pears to the jailers, turnkeys, and their wives and children. I adroitly managed to gain some information regarding the head jailer. I learned that his wife was rather gentle and had compassion on prisoners. I soon succeeded in winning her favor by various presents of money and clothes. One evening, whilst the turnkeys and bailiffs were drinking in the tavern, and spending the money which I had secretly sent them, the jailer's wife took the keys and led me by subterranean passages to the cell of the princess. Great God ! but those horrible cells, under the foundations of the castle, were fearful. Most of them had no light ; those that had any received it

through enormous iron gratings which opened on the moat. As we passed among these catacombs, the woman showed me iron doors, thickly studded with nails, of which the heads were as large as my hand; these doors, fastened with three or even four bolts, were the cells wherein they had buried alive, with irons on their feet and round their neck, the Duke de Brissac, the Count de Maurepas, De Serrent, several bishops, deans, and other persons of high rank. My blood froze in my veins; my heart beat violently when I heard, as we passed, the sighs and groans of these noble people, whom the democratic fury of the wild beasts of the Convention had immersed in these living tombs. Reaching at length a sort of river gate, in the form of a trap-door, my guide raised the wooden door and fastened it to a hook in the wall, and we descended by a winding staircase which led to a small, square enclosure, where the walls were covered with moisture and we were almost choked by a sickening vapor. At the end of this vault was a sort of well, called the razor-well, because the cavity was covered with sharp spikes, which pierced and mangled the unfortunate victims who were thrown head first into it, and, if still alive when they reached the bottom, were devoured by rats. In this tomb there was at one side what seemed like the mouth of an oven closed by an iron door. My guide drew aside two large bolts, the door grated on its hinges, and we came to a second opening closed by a rusty iron grating, which my guide opened by a chain fastened in the wall.

Then we went down four steps, and I found myself in a dark cell, where I perceived, crouched upon the floor in the corner, the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe, whom I scarcely recognized for no trace remained of that rare beauty which had dazzled the court. Although she had been so short a time a prisoner, she looked like a ghost.

“ I gave a cry and cast myself on her neck, exclaiming :

“ ‘ Aunt, aunt ! it is I, Clotilde, whom this charitable woman has brought thither to you. Do you not know me ? Will you not embrace me ? ’ The poor princess raised her clasped hands to heaven, murmuring :

“ ‘ O good Jesus ! ’

“ She was obliged to put her hand to her eyes, dazzled by the faint light which came through the door by which we entered. She tried to embrace me, but she was so weak and languid that one hand fell by her side, the other on my shoulder. Her voice was so feeble that I could scarcely distinguish her words :

“ ‘ Clotilde, is the king still alive ? And are the queen and her dear children still with him ? ’

“ ‘ Yes, ’ I answered, ‘ but all the royal family are, as you know, prisoners in the Temple, awaiting the moment when God, taking pity on the miseries of France, will restore them their liberty and the power of putting an end to the sufferings of their faithful subjects and rewarding their fidelity. ’

“ My aunt then asked for my father and all her other relatives, and finally said :



“ ‘May God reward you, Clotilde, for your charity and courage! Jesus has vouchsafed me this unexpected happiness, which has filled me with joy—joy far greater than I can express; but, my beloved niece, if you, who are so full of the love of God, could by any means be enabled to bring me the great consolation of a priest who would hear my confession and bring me secretly the Blessed Sacrament, my joy would be so great, O dear Clotilde! that the darkness of this place would become for me the most dazzling light, and my cruel sufferings be changed into heavenly delights.’

“ I answered that it would be a difficult undertaking:

“ ‘But,’ I continued, ‘if God and this good Christian who guided me thither would again assist me, I would risk my life a hundred times to accomplish your pious desire.’

“ When, after leaving the dungeon, I related all that had passed to my father, he wept most of the night, and fully shared my deep grief.

“ Thenceforth I devoted myself to this object, that I might be enabled to give the unhappy princess the consolation of receiving her God. At last I found a priest who was courageous enough to undertake this holy mission at the risk of his life, and I had great hopes of inducing the jailer’s wife to aid me once more. One day I took my baskets of fruit to the Temple, which I had begun to frequent, hoping to see or hear something of the royal family, or that by chance I might see and salute through the bars of their window the king, queen, or Dau-

phin, when all at once I heard a noise like the roaring of a tempest. It was the 2d of September; an immense crowd came rushing tumultuously to the spot. The quarter in which the Temple stood was so far removed from the centre of Paris that I had heard nothing of the horrible massacre committed in the morning, in which perished so many of the nobility, priesthood, and religious, who refused to take the horrible oath exacted by the Assembly.

“I was trembling in every limb; but, putting a good face on it, I sat down, with my baskets of fruit beside me, on the steps of the Gothic staircase which led to the tower. The crowd came hurrying on, shouting and yelling, bearing a bleeding head upon a pike. O my God! I recognized it: it was the severed head of the Princess de Lamballe, whom these monsters had that morning slain in the prison. They were carrying it in triumph to the tower of the Temple, that the queen might behold this horrible evidence of the fury of the populace! The wretch who bore the bloody trophy hoped that the royal family might be still in the dining-room, and he cried in his brutal voice:

“‘Come, Antoinette, traitor to France, persecutor of the people of Paris—come, horrible fury, come and rejoice your eyes with the sight of your worthy friend.’

“And so saying, he climbed the iron railing below the window, and, stretching his arm as far as he could, he succeeded in raising the head to the win-

dow of the room. Fortunately, the royal family had left the table and returned to their apartments before these demons arrived. The king's valet de chambre, Cléry, was just then at dinner with Tison and his wife; the latter, seeing the mutilated head, which she at once recognized, appearing at the window, gave a piercing scream. The monsters without, supposing it was the queen that screamed, broke out into a volley of abuse and ribald jests.

“ ‘Good! good! The witch screams at sight of her dear friend, the Lamballe. Behold her, blood-thirsty tigress, monster, stained with cruelty and perfidy.’\* ”

“ These words made me shudder. The bloody face of my aunt's assassin, who cast fierce glances at the window of the queen's apartments, was frightful to behold. The blood that flowed drop by drop from the veins of his victim had fallen on his forehead and rolled down his cheeks, stained his hair and beard, and reddened his shirt and his hands. It was a sight which would have filled the bravest soul with horror. I turned from the spot, but I met another mob dragging along with hooks a bloody corpse covered with mud and dust. Although mutilated, disfigured, and mangled, the hair dishevelled and clotted with blood, I recognized it also: it was the good Duke de Brissac, the friend of Louis XVI., whom they had likewise slain in prison, and were dragging to the Temple

\* Thiéulen, “*Fastes de la Révolution Française*,” vol. iii.

that the king might look upon him with shuddering horror.\* My terror was so great that I almost lost my reason. The blood of him whom they thus trailed ignominiously in the mire, and upon which I feared to tread, was the blood of one whom I was soon to call my father; for I was betrothed to Gaston, his eldest son, the inheritor alike of his great wealth, his many virtues, and undaunted valor. Poor Gaston! if you had been in Paris, and had thus met these monsters dragging after them the bloody corpse of your father, what would have been your fate? You would have rushed upon these tigers, endeavoring to rescue that beloved body from their clutches. It was a horrible day for me; I wandered through the streets like one demented. I was hastening to my father, but at every moment it seemed as if I would see him also slain before my eyes.

“Having reached the Place Dauphine, I saw a great pile of wood which had been set on fire; the flames rose high in the air with horrid, crackling noise. The square was covered with an immense mob, who were amusing themselves by roasting a Swiss of the Royal Guard; the unfortunate man struggled to escape this horrible torture, but these demons drove him back into the flames, where he was soon reduced to ashes. God of goodness! what did I then behold? The Countess de Pérignon, my mother’s dearest friend, who had been captur-

\* Thieulen, vol. iii.

ed just as she was leaving Paris with her two daughters, my gentle and beloved friends, were being dragged to the same pile. At this sight my knees shook under me and the blood curdled in my veins. I would have fallen, but I leaned for support against a pillar; terror and compassion rooted me to the spot. I saw, alas! my beautiful, my pure and modest friends, together with their mother, stripped of their garments, and their naked bodies rubbed with oil and grease to roast them alive. O my gentle Lilla! Lilla, who was then a modest, timid girl of fifteen, of virginal innocence and purity, cast down her eyes, her face grew crimson, her heart beat painfully, and her limbs trembled violently; but these pitiless monsters continued their horrible work and drove her into the flames, which the wind blew fiercely toward her. Her dear face became distorted with agony, her white flesh blackened and scorched, while her heart-rending cries of agony pierced the air—poor dove, in the clutches of her cruel tormentors. O my Lilla! why could I not cover you with my veil? Why could I not bring you the slight refreshment of some water? She died shrieking in agony, her body scorched, singed, and blackened, as a victim offered to the Spouse of virgins, to her Jesus, whom she loved so much, and who, I trust, bid her soul welcome to the eternal refreshment of the heavenly dew. Her body, indeed, writhed amid the torments of the fire, but her soul had been already offered with the fulness of love.

“ And Gemma, Lilla’s elder sister—she, in the



flower of her youth and beauty, more robust than Lilla, and with more acute sensibility, in the midst of her sufferings shrieked like a wounded lioness, and writhed and struggled to escape the fierce torture of the flames; but one of the executioners, with a baker's long iron fork with sharp spiked points, held her in the fire. Then the poor girl, feeling the hair of her head scorched off by the flames, cried in the most piteous accents:

“ ‘O men! kill me, I implore you. Who will have mercy upon me and end my sufferings?’ ”

“The ferocious and unnatural mob grinned and laughed with a sort of frenzy, and, clapping their hands, yelled:

“ ‘Oh! what an aristocratic roast. How good it smells! We will make a hearty meal of this milk-calf.’ ” A young man, himself of the bourgeois class, who could no longer find it in his heart to behold such agony, broke through the crowd, and, aiming at poor Gemma's heart, killed her with a pistol shot. Then these tigers, to whom her sufferings had given such amusement, seized the generous youth and cast him also into the flames, where he was soon reduced to ashes.\*

“Meanwhile, the poor Countess de Pérignon, whose flesh was being consumed in these devouring flames, and whose maternal heart was suffering so acutely at the sight of her children's agony, extended her hands towards them, encouraging Lilla to suffer for Jesus Christ, and calming her Gem-

\* Thieulen, vol. iii.

ma's cries of anguish, while her children in their torture cried to her for help. At last the countess fell, a heap of cinders, and the hellish multitude continued their satanic work by casting into the flames six venerable priests, the eldest of whom, over sixty years of age, his hair whitened and his form emaciated by suffering, was put upon a fork and roasted at a slow fire amid horrible sufferings. Those odious people exulted and rejoiced at his torments, while the five other priests, having given each other absolution and taken their last farewell, made the sign of the cross, and rushed into the flames, where they were almost immediately suffocated by the smoke, and their tormentors, seeing themselves thus deprived of so much sport, endeavored with hooks and pitchforks to drag them out of the fire." \*

The Countess d'Alnavilla had listened with horror and amazement to this fearful narrative. Irene and Ubaldo, pale and trembling, pressed close to their mother's knee and looked with tearful eyes at Clotilde and Antoinette, not daring to stir. Clotilde having paused a moment in her story, the children with one breath asked her what crime Lilla had committed to be thus burned alive.

"What crime?" cried Clotilde. "That of being innocent, pure, good, fearing God, and being of noble birth. Believe me, dear children, that if infidelity came down like a plague upon Italy, your father, mother, and yourselves might be treated the

\* Thieulen, vol. iii.

same. Neither your tender age, your beauty, nor your goodness would avail to save you. Pray to God, my dear children, that he may save Italy from such a calamity. I know, indeed, that many of your noble lords and ladies eagerly devour the works of Voltaire and other French infidels; but, unfortunately, they do not perceive that the first shock of that dreadful tempest will assail them and engulf them in utter ruin.\*

Then the Countess Virginia asked Clotilde :

“How did you contrive to escape from Paris at such a time ?”

“I will tell you, madame,” replied the young girl. “After the dreadful death of the Countess de Pérignon and my saintly friends—I may call them so, for they died innocent and in a good cause—I managed to reach home, pale, trembling, and half-fainting with terror. My father, seeing me thus, cried :

“‘Clotilde, what is the matter ? What has happened ? You ran too great a risk in being out to-day—the most cruel day that has ever dawned for France. What has befallen you ? Tell me quickly ; do not keep me in suspense.’

“I told him all that I had seen ; and my good father, terrified at such awful excesses of cruelty, determined to leave France, saying that he could do nothing for his king, and was uselessly expos-

\* Many persons think it unnatural that Clotilde could have endured such sights ; but if they consider that in these great national agitations the mind becomes, as it were, stupefied, and is filled with a sort of despairing courage, they will see that such a thing is within the bounds of probability.

ing his own life. He changed all that he had into gold pieces, and placed them in a belt which he wore round his waist, except a small portion which we sewed into the seams and folds of my dress; then, arraying ourselves in the most humble garb, we set out for Grenoble in search of my mother and Antoinette.

“Meanwhile, my brother, only twenty-two years of age, was engaged with Gaston de Brissac, my betrothed, in the war of La Vendée, and marched, under the standard of the golden lily, from Bocage to Olonne, led on by the valiant Lescure and the brave Larochejacquelin, who was about the same age as my brother. He cried out to the noble Bretons:

“‘I am a child in years; but in courage I will show myself worthy to be your leader. I lead; follow me. If I draw back, kill me; if I fall, avenge me.’

“Gaston and my brother were with Charette and Kersabiec always in the thickest of the combat, and often fought side by side with Cathelineau and Larochejacquelin like two veteran soldiers, so that even the bravest soldiers of Brittany and La Vendée cried as they beheld them:

“‘With such youths at our head we fear not the threats of Klüber nor the wrath of Lechelle. Vive the King! Vive La Vendée! Death to the Jacobins!’”

As she spoke Clotilde’s face glowed with noble pride; but all at once she grew agitated, her head dropped on her breast, great tears rolled down her cheeks, and she ceased to speak.

Virginia, taking her hand, caressed her and whispered some cheering words. Then Clotilde raised her head, and, wiping away her tears, continued:

“These recollections are like a knife plunged into my heart. I know not whether my tears flow when I think of my lover or of the loss of my parents; but I am full of sorrow for both one and the other, and overwhelmed by the one great loss which has deprived me of all happiness on this earth. My father and I, having passed through numberless dangers, reached Grenoble, where I had the great happiness of embracing my mother and sister. But very soon the good citizens of the place were thrown into terror and confusion by the arrival of a troop of Marseillais singing the horrible ‘*Ça ira*’ to stir up the Jacobins to exterminate the remaining royalists. The few nobles who lived there solitary and apart from the world, so as not to be exposed to the insults and opprobrium of the wicked, at the first rumor of this disturbance sought safety in flight for themselves and their families, and passed into Italy by the road which leads through the lower Alps, over Monte Viso, Monte Genevra, and through the gorges of Luzerne and Finestrelle. My father, who was of course a soldier, to save his wife and children, with military foresight divided the little band into two parties. He confided my sister and myself to an old domestic, who had been born in those mountains, and, having been with us from childhood, was devotedly attached to us. My mother assumed the



disguise of a peasant woman of the mountains, putting on a broad-leaved hat and carrying a basket of bread and cheese, as if she were bringing food to the woodcutters. My father arrayed himself in coarse, striped woollen stockings and a rough surtout of speckled gray, such as is worn by the mountaineers of the Alps near Barcelona.

“We advanced slowly the first day, and took our chance in huts along the road, in one of which we had the good-fortune to spend the first night all together and peacefully enough; but the next day we were again separated. My sister and I, with our guide, took a little by-path; our parents took another, my mother taking care to keep in advance to make it appear that she had no connection with my father, who followed her at some distance. But the Jacobins of Grenoble, having been apprised of the departure of several noble families and many priests, filled with rage, set out in pursuit of them, and, overtaking several, slew them without mercy. My father, who was rather stout and utterly unaccustomed to climbing mountains, plodded along for some time under the rays of a burning sun, and climbed the steep rocks with great difficulty, when, coming to a clear, fresh stream which ran in the middle of a wood, he stopped an instant to rest. Scarcely had he removed his coat to bathe his arms and hands in the cool water, when six of these assassins rushed out from behind the trees, and, seizing him unexpectedly, cried: ‘Who are you?’

“My father, with no change of countenance, at

once replied that he was a poor workman of the mountains of Barcelona, and that he was on his way to saw wood for a farmer beyond the mountains. But the men, observing the fine quality of the shirt which he unfortunately wore under the rustic garment, cried :

“ ‘Ruffian, you lie! That is not the kind of linen used by workmen. People of your condition do not wear the fine linen of thieving aristocrats.’

“ So saying, they seized him by the throat and dragged him into the bushes. There they stripped him, and found in the lining of his vest the Grand Cross of St. Louis, and a note written by the king’s own hand, and beginning, ‘My dear duke.’ They also discovered the belt which contained our whole fortune in pieces of gold. Seeing this, they shouted for joy, and, jingling the gold in the palms of their hands, they cried :

“ ‘If the bowels of these aristocrats are filled with gold, the best thing we can do is to rip them open. Come here, priest-slayer, and tap this barrel of gold.’

“ The man so addressed, who was of fierce and bloodthirsty aspect, plunged his dagger into my poor father, while the others stabbed him in the heart and breast, till, invoking the sweet name of Jesus, he fell dead.

“ My mother, having heard the noise behind her, returned, and, seeing her husband seized and dragged into the forest, gave a piercing shriek and fell senseless behind a tree. The cry was heard by two of the savage band, who immediately

guessed that their victim was not alone. They set out to examine the place around, and, seeing nothing, were about to return to their companions, when one of them, striking his pike on the earth, said :

“ ‘I am sure there is some one around here. That was a woman’s voice. I am going to find her.’ And they recommenced their search, and at length found the duchess lying senseless behind a tree.

“ ‘Ho ! ho ! a peasant woman. The devil she is ! What new notion did she take to be frightened at our handsome faces ? She’s not one of us.’

“ And they began to kick her and move her with their feet, as if she were a dog. Coming to herself, and seeing their demoniac faces bending over her, she cried : ‘ Save my husband !’

“ She was at once seized by these wretches, who attempted to snatch off a little coral necklace that she wore peasant-fashion round her neck. By a chance movement which she made they saw the end of a gold chain. They immediately grasped it, and found attached to it a medallion set in diamonds, with the portrait of Marie An’oinette. With a cry of fiendish joy they dragged my poor mother towards their companions. In vain she cried for mercy. They found their comrades seated on the ground dividing the money they had found upon my father. Seeing the others approach, they cried out with hellish mirth :

“ ‘ Come and see how the bowels of aristocrats are filled with gold. Take your share. Who is this woman you are dragging with you ? Where

did you find her ?' And the others replied : ' Oh ! you do not know ; she is one of the dainty, fine ladies. She don't look much like a peasant. This hat don't suit her head, and that gown don't look well on her back. You are welcome, Madame Aristocrat. Oh ! isn't she grum. What ugly faces she makes ! How she pouts !'

"Then, having hastily related how they had found and torn from around her neck the portrait of the queen, and that she was the wife of the duke whom they had just put to death with such barbarous cruelty, they seized her by the hair and dragged her along to where they had left my father's corpse. But, O my God ! that corpse was mangled and dis-membered ; nothing remained but the bloody trunk. They had first cut off the head and stuck it on a pointed branch, then fixed the arms and legs underneath it. At this horrible sight my mother fell to the earth, and, perhaps through a faint sentiment of compassion, the monsters despatched her at once with their swords and pikes.

"My father's valet-de-chambre, who followed them in secluded by-paths, had also heard the ill-omened sounds, and, hiding behind a clump of trees, had witnessed the horrible massacre. He remained concealed until the wretches resumed their way ; then he emerged from his hiding-place, full of pity and horror, and, by means of a small pike which he wore in his belt and the axe which he carried in his hand to denote his calling of woodman, in the shadow of a rock, in the lonely

soil of the forest, he dug a grave, wherein he laid the honored remains, covering them again with earth, making on the spot a sort of mound of leaves and branches, and marking the surrounding trees, that thus their grave might be discovered if the time ever came when they could be laid in consecrated earth.

“All this time Antoinette and I, accompanied by our nurse, slowly ascended the steep slopes of these mountainous regions, still unconscious of the dreadful fate of our beloved parents. But at length we came to a spot surrounded on almost every side by precipices, and heard in the valley beneath the sound of horns, the barking of dogs, and the neighing of frightened steeds. Then we were seized with terror, fearing that we were about to fall into the hands of those cruel hunters of men, of whom we had so often heard. After a hasty consultation, we agreed to proceed separately to the huts of the shepherds on the slopes of Monte Genevra. The noise increased, and the cries of the fierce band resounded through the mountains. Our old nurse had taken the easiest road, and climbed the narrow path with great difficulty, holding on with one hand to the rock, while with the other she held little Antoinette, who was so exhausted that she could scarcely walk. I, being stronger and more courageous, ascended with tolerable ease and daring by an almost inaccessible path. I sprang from rock to rock, swung myself from peak to peak, passed by streams which rushed foaming over the glaciers, till I reached what I



thought was a place of safety. Still I went on and on, plunging further and further into the woods, not knowing where I was going, till, overcome by the fiery heat of the sun, I was obliged to stop in a small and solitary valley, surrounded on all sides by terrible gorges and deep crevasses.

“Immense volumes of water poured down from these openings, producing in their descent a white, foaming spray, and rushing with fearful noise into the depths of the valley, forming there clear, crystal streams. The banks of these streams were thickly covered with ancient trees, the sturdy oak and spreading chestnut, whose deep shades rendered the place solemn and venerable beyond measure. I stopped, trembling and uncertain, in that deserted spot, not daring to take a step. Seeing the night coming on, I looked around for some place of shelter. I discovered behind a heap of stones a sort of opening. Approaching, I beheld the entrance to a cave, over which projected masses of rock covered with ivy, moss, and lichen, that formed, as it were, an immense green dome in the shape of an umbrella. In the interior of this cavern there was, of course, profound darkness; a perpetual night reigned there, and I could not, therefore, penetrate its depths. My heart failed me as I looked. My terror was increased by the noisy flight of the vultures, hawks, and other birds of prey circling round the rocks and swooping down into the valley, flapping their wings with a fierce impetuosity which seemed to me of ill-omen. Terrified, I concealed myself behind a large stone in

the cave, and, utterly exhausted, I sank upon the ground and took from my basket a morsel of stale bread, which was all I had for supper.

“Before it was quite dark I perceived a projection of the rock at some distance from the ground, and, climbing by the branches with which it was overhung, I succeeded in reaching the top of it, and disturbed a perfect cloud of owls, who flew around, beating their wings in my face and hair. A shudder of horror passed through me at the unexpected noise that startled the solemn air, and at sight of two great fiery eyes, like burning coals, which glared at me with a fixed, stony glare. Then I hid my face in my hands, and remained for some time motionless to escape this gaze, which transfixed me. Each time that I attempted to uncover my face I saw the fiery eyes, and the darkness and my terror had so worked upon my imagination that they seemed as if approaching me, and, notwithstanding my intense fatigue, I found it impossible to sleep during all that weary night.

“My overburdened heart found relief in a prayer to Mary, that good mother, that gentle advocate, the refuge of sinners. Most fervently I recommended to her my poor parents, my brother, and my lover, that she might protect them and restore them to me. O God! I knew not yet that the souls of my father and mother were already delivered from the miseries of the world, and even then in the enjoyment of heavenly bliss, praying for their desolate orphans. Just as the sweet thought of Mary had calmed my heart and made

it seem possible that I might take a little sleep, I was suddenly assailed by a still more terrible fear. Hearing what seemed to be the sound of footsteps advancing from the other end of the cavern, I turned to look, and perceived a little light, which approached slowly, slowly, and this time real'y in my direction. Trembling, I pressed close against the rock which sheltered me, and resigned myself to whatever might happen, having scarcely strength to murmur, 'Jesus, help me!'

"The light grew brighter as it approached. At length I recognized a man, whose face was so worn and emaciated that he resembled a spectre, bearing in one hand a little lamp, while with the other he shaded his eyes from the light. From under a black felt hat his long, white hair fell over his shoulders. He wore long moustaches, and from his chin a silvery beard covered his breast. When he reached the middle of the cavern, the light of his lamp fell upon the fiery eyes of the spectre that had terrified me, and which now flapped its great wings, and with a loud scream took flight. Then I perceived that the object of my terror was a large owl. The man paused at the flapping of the bird's wings, and perceiving, in his turn, that it proceeded from the flight of an owl who had taken shelter in the cave, he passed on. Having reached the entrance of the cave, he paused again, as if to listen, looked cautiously out into the night, then, after advancing a few steps further, he extinguished the light, and everything was again in profound darkness."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### THE CAVE OF MONTE GINEVRA.

O MY Italy! thou readest the cruel history related by the beautiful but hapless Clotilde to the Countess d'Almavilla in the last chapter, and thou hast not the slightest presentiment of the dangers which menace thee. Thou readest it tranquilly, like one who, witnessing at a theatre the tragedies of former times, feels himself moved to pity or terror, but represses these natural sentiments by saying to himself: "What folly! These are but the idle fancies of the poet."

In similar manner, reading these atrocities perpetrated in France sixty years ago, thou wouldst fain regard them as romances or pictures highly colored and embellished by an imagination which delights in scenes of blood and carnage, and thou considerest not that the painter has only portrayed a faint reflection of the reality, or recorded one-thousandth part of these events which occurred in those bygone years. Thou knowest not or pausest not to think that thou hast nourished in thy breast for many years the germ whose offshoots struck a deadly blow to the glorious and gentle realm of France at the moment when it thought itself

stronger, fairer, richer, more prosperous than ever. Her very vitals had long been preyed upon by the gangrene of secret societies, which gradually crept over her whole body, and corrupted it, bone and sinew, from head to foot.

This deadly plague had also been consuming thee for many years, corroding and poisoning thee in a manner indescribable, till the first cruel symptoms of the malady appeared in 1848. Those who would persuade thee that thou art now entirely healed and restored are fearfully mistaken. The fatal and loathsome plague still lurks in thy bosom, fiercer, more deadly than ever; and if, through fire and smoke, thou dost not arise and root it out from thy vitals, thou art lost. Look around thee. Beho'd thy noble and generous youth, with their lofty aspirations and vigorous arms, thy hope, thy love, thy glory, and thy crown—behold them, we repeat, menaced by a thousand venomous serpents, who lie hidden among thy grass and flowers, whilst they unconscious sleep, or in thoughtless security are occupied with their pleasures; yet the bite of these reptiles, though painless and almost invisible, is a deadly poison, which may at any moment pervade their being.

Thy seducers cry aloud and publish in all their journals that secret societies no longer exist; that everything is done openly and in the full light of day; that the *retrogressionists* tell thee old wives' tales and see Mazzinian Carbonari in every hole and corner, at every turn, in the garret, in the cellar, in the graveyard, and almost in the



sanctuary; that there is no cause for alarm, for secret societies have gone out of fashion, and thou mayest rest easy. The chiefs of the conspirators are almost all *in domo Petri*, in the power of the law, in chains.

Ah! so the chiefs are chained and fettered. Beware, my fair country; the sect calls clubs and plays spades, as card-players say. The chiefs are never chained, and, all unsuspected by thee, walk thy streets, and exchange signals with their brethren, who know them by their signs; and there are more of them than thou dreamest, and their knives are well sharpened and always prepared to strike. And when they come forth from their lair, then, at least, thou shalt see that the massacre of thy people will in cruelty surpass human imagination. God in his mercy deliver thee from it! But if it be his will to make use of the arms of these men in the designs of his justice, his vengeance will be as complete as that which came upon France in '92. We would not be prophets of evil to thee; but we would save thee. God, before he strikes, flashes the glittering blade before our eyes, so that we may have recourse to him with confidence, and use every effort to avert the evil.

No, dear Italy, we are not the first who have warned thee. It was thine enemies themselves who, already believing the victory certain, proclaimed in their books and journals that on the day of the third stroke\* they will spare neither king, nor

\* Riscossa.

prince, nor magistrate, nor bishop, nor priest, nor noble, nor citizen, but will make their warm blood flow in torrents in the churches, in the palaces, in the streets of the Italian cities ; that they will walk proudly and triumphantly over the ruins of thy buildings, warm themselves at the flames of their conflagrations, bathe themselves in the blood of the friends of God, and make to themselves a new Italy, without Christ, without the Church, without nobles, and without monarchs. Since these announcements are made before their secret councils, and published in Switzerland, and proclaimed in their secret addresses to the conspirators, it would be folly to consider them as the idle fictions of their own occult romancers.

Clotilde continued as follows to relate to Madame d'Almavilla the story of her flight :

“ The moon, just rising from behind the distant crest of the mountains, shed a soft light over the rugged slopes, and, falling into the valley, touched with silver light the gray, precipitous rocks, and cast weird, fantastic shadows into the mouth of the cave. When the stranger, having emerged like a spectre from the recesses of the cavern, had extinguished the light and was lost to my sight in the darkness, I did not venture to move, but remained as near as possible to the rock, keeping my gaze fixed in the direction whence I could hear the sound of his footsteps ; but the figure, having reached the mouth of the cave, again paused to listen. No sound was heard but the distant roar of the falling waters, and the flapping of the night birds’

wings as they pursued their flight through the solemn air, seeking their prey. All else was still, wrapped in a silence so profound and religious that even the tempestuous winds dared not break in upon it, nor the voices of the wild beasts disturb it.

“At length the stranger, emerging from the cave, looked cautiously around, and again paused an instant irresolute; then kneeling upon a large stone on which the rays of the moon were falling softly, he crossed his arms upon his breast, and bowed his head in deep adoration, till, suddenly raising his face to heaven, he prayed:

““O God! protector of France, turn on her misery the eyes of thy mercy. Lord, smite her not in thy fury, nor chastise her in thy wrath. Have mercy on her, Lord God, for she is infirm and troubled in all her bones, and her soul is cast down and dejected. Thou seest her whole realm stricken unto death, her king a captive, her nobles banished, imprisoned, stripped of their goods, or most cruelly put to death by fire, sword, or axe; her bishops led forth to martyrdom; her priests cast into the deepest dungeons, doomed to toil in the galleys, condemned to the scaffold, or with countless cruel tortures slain like wild beasts; thy consecrated virgin spouses insulted and reviled, put to death like doves in the clutches of the vulture. Thou, thou, Lord God, creator of all things, hast been by these new Nimrods denied, and they would fain erase thy name from the universe, and thy worship from the face

of the earth. Thy Son, the Redeemer, dwelling in the Sacrament of thy holy tabernacles, and offered upon thy peaceful altars, is cast out from thy temples and trampled in the mire. Ah! have pity at sight of such iniquities; turn towards us in our bewailing, and sustain the power of thine arm, for thou didst say to Jesus: "Thou art my Son, and I have made thee ruler of the nations; I speak in my wrath against those who rage against the Lord; I will trouble them in my fury, and strike them, and reduce them to dust like the potter's vessels."'

"Then the venerable stranger was silent; his eyes remained fixed on heaven; his arms extended in supplication; his face glowed; copious tears flowed from his eyes, and bedewed as with pearls his silvery beard; his breast heaved; he sighed deeply, and seemed to rise above himself, entranced in God in sweet ecstasy.

"Seeing him thus fervently engaged in prayer, I was entirely reassured. I understood at once that this stranger was one of the holy hermits of the valley. Full of confidence, I determined to present myself to him, asking his intercession with God and his blessing to assist me in reaching Italy in safety. With this intention, I arose softly, and, letting myself slide down to the floor of the cave, I waited till he had returned to himself and had finished his meditation. All at once I heard the sound of footsteps among the brushwood outside the cave, and some one coughing loudly, as if to announce his approach. At this noise the hermit cast down his eyes, let his arms fall by his side,

sprang to his feet, and had scarcely done so when a man appeared, threw himself at his feet, kissing his hand respectfully, and saying :

“ ‘ My lord, it is I. Pardon me that I come so late, but something occurred to detain me on the way.’

“ The man was in the prime of life, seeming about forty years of age ; he was small, but of lithe and vigorous frame, his limbs combining a certain suppleness with great strength, gained, no doubt, in climbing the mountain heights. He was dressed in a sort of doublet, with knee-breeches, stout buckskin gaiters, and strong, thick-soled shoes ; he wore on his head a low, broad leaved hat, but when he removed it I saw by his tonsure that he was a priest. I stood in amazement, seeing that this holy anchorite was a bishop, and my desire grew still stronger to cast myself at his feet and ask his blessing. Then his lordship spoke :

“ ‘ Put on your hat, Father Paul. It seems an age since I saw you, and I have been really anxious about you. Had you a safe journey to Turin and Milan ? What say they in Italy of the fury of the revolutionists ?’

“ ‘ My lord,’ replied the priest, ‘ thoughtful people are deeply afflicted at it ; they tremble for themselves, and foresee that this destroying flame will sooner or later cross the Alps with redoubled fury. They are much distressed thereat, and recommend themselves to God, that he may deign to save Italy from such calamities ; while, on the contrary, vain and arrogant men, imbued with the



fatal doctrines of our Encyclopedists, and desiring license which they call liberty, wait impatiently till the terrible fury of war shall descend upon Italian countries, with the victorious shout of "Equality! Independence!" believing themselves slaves under the paternal government of kings or the mild administration of their ancient republics. But what most filled me with amazement was to find not a few worthy ecclesiastics, principally young men, making common cause with those who desire the republic one and indivisible, governed by the people, and endeavoring to communicate their ideas to peaceable and inoffensive people who mind their own affairs without interfering in politics. I have heard them say that it was the duty of good priests to enlighten the people concerning their rights, and show them what a misfortune it was to be without country, without liberty, and without national independence.'

"Hearing this, the bishop could not contain himself, but exclaimed, tapping the priest on the shoulder:

"My dear Father Paul, the sacred duty of priests is not to preach to the people their rights, but their duties, the first of which is obedience, and not revolt; reverence, and not disloyalty; mildness and peace, not strife and anger. Christ, the Eternal Son of God, the King of kings, Lord of lords, came down upon earth to give us the example of obedience, becoming himself subject to all laws, paying himself the tribute to the Romans, and never in the slightest degree opposing any

law of the empire—Christ cried aloud : “ Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s, and to God the things which are God’s,” and was obedient even to the death of the cross. Our kings do not attempt to crucify us. It is the demagogues who crucify, behead, burn us, all the while dinning in our ears, Liberty ! Equality ! Where is true liberty, if not the liberty of the children of God, who are taught to obey men through the love and fear of God ? I have often discussed this point with his Lordship Talleyrand de Périgord, Bishop of Autun, who loudly preached the rights and liberty of the people. He can now behold and rejoice at the liberty which the Girondists gave to France. If these young Italian ecclesiastics of whom you speak, Father Paul, love a liberty which springs from rebellion, let them look to it that they be not the first to taste its bitter fruits, like so many of our French priests, who, misled by specious words, preached in good faith the liberty that ended in the famous oath of allegiance to the Constitution, which, when they refused to pronounce it, cost them their lives and condemned them to the bitter torments of a cruel death, while, thus too late discovering their mistake, they struck their breasts in tardy repentance.’

“ ‘ My lord,’ replied Father Paul, ‘ these good Italian priests imagine that their popular leaders are not Robespierres, and that the Italian revolution would be brought about peaceably. Their idea is this : that there shall be no strangers in the household, and that they shall form an inde-

pendent, self-governing nation, whose power shall extend from the Alps to the Tyrrhenian Sea.

“‘Father Paul,’ continued the bishop, ‘the Jansenists have tinctured the universities with these doc’rines ; infidel philosophers have supported them, and learned men, whether they be in coat or soutane, who only look at the surface of things, have also accepted them. Believe me, there is another science than that of the schools—the practical science of Jesus Christ. If these young ecclesiastics, who consider themselves so wise, would make an hour’s meditation every morning, prepare to say Mass with contrite hearts, recite their breviaries devoutly, study the sacred eloquence of the Gospel and the holy Fathers, hear confessions with patience and charity, visit prisoners, comfort the afflicted, avoid worldly pleasures, practise exterior modesty and interior mortification, I assure you, Father Paul, that they would concern themselves much less about the rights of man, and much more about teaching the catechism, the Commandments of God and of the Church, to the people whom the Lord has confided to them. . . . But we who have really entered into the sanctuary, at this solemn hour, in the solitude of these rocks, may say in truth that we are truly preaching in the desert. No, no, dear Father Paul ; the Italians have too much good sense, and you, in your zeal and great sorrow for the condition of France, exaggerate the number of deluded priests, whom I fervently trust might be counted upon our fingers. I am certain that you

did not hear such sentiments from their own lips, but from the artful leaders of the revolutionists, who misrepresent these poor priests for a double object : in the first place, to gain the populace by urging the approval of the clergy, and then to calumniate them to the Government, and therefore making them their accomplices and a snare to the ignorant. For the rest, I repeat that the priests who lend themselves to such follies are very, very few ; for there is more wisdom and learning among the Italian clergy than their opponents care to find. And now tell me of the circumstance which detained you on your way.’”

At this point Clotilde again burst into tears, telling the countess how Father Paul described to the bishop his meeting upon the road with her father’s valet, who was scouring the mountains in search of the two young girls, and then proceeded to give an account of the dreadful death of her parents.

“Hearing this,” continued Clotilde, “I fainted and fell heavily to the ground. At the sound of my fall the two ecclesiastics started and turned towards the mouth of the cavern in surprise and alarm, exclaiming : ‘Who is there ?’

“I heard, but could not answer. Then the bishop, striking a flint, lit his little lamp, held it above his head, shaded his eyes with his hand, and perceived me stretched upon the floor. Running to my assistance, Father Paul exclaimed :

“ ‘Whence comes this young mountain girl ?’

“ ‘I know not,’ replied the bishop ; ‘her sudden appearance astonishes me. She doubtless sought

refuge in the cave, and, hearing you describe the murder of this duke, was overcome by horror and compassion, and fainted. Here is my flask. Go, bring a little fresh water from the stream.'

"The priest brought the water; they sprinkled my face, and I soon recovered consciousness.

"When they learned that I was the daughter of the duke, I cannot tell you all the comforting words with which the holy bishop sought to soothe my deep affliction. He spoke sweetly and encouragingly, his speech full of the unction of Christ and dictated by his own ineffable charity. He wept with me, and bewailed with me my irreparable loss. His heart and soul seemed, as it were, infused into mine to revive, sustain, and enrich them with the heavenly strength proceeding from the almighty power of God. Finally he opened his coat and drew out the episcopal cross, and, presenting it to me, said:

"Kiss it, my daughter. In this cross is our salvation, our life, our joy, and our felicity. It contains some relics of the martyrs, who were sacrificed to the fury of tyrants, and died by the sword, by the axe, or at the stake, in the most excruciating torments. May it elevate your heart and your hope, fortifying you with Christian courage; may it save you from the hatred of the impious, or make you worthy to suffer with Christ. Come, my child, enter into the interior of my cavern. I have remained concealed here for a year and a half, not through cowardice or weakness of heart, but through love for my poor lambs, assailed by fierce



wolves. I, their archbishop, can from here address them comforting words and encourage them with the thought of eternal life.'

“So saying, the bishop, giving the lamp to Father Paul, and taking me by the hand, led me through tortuous passages, now up, now down, across little ravines, to the verge of a deep abyss, over which a board had been thrown to serve as a bridge. Having crossed it, the archbishop guided me through a sort of cleft in the rock. After some further turnings we at length reached an almost circular apartment, in one corner of which stood a little bed, and at no great distance I could perceive a very small and humble couch, and what seemed to be a head among the bear-skin coverings. There were also a sitting-stool, a rough table on which stood a writing-desk strewn with loose sheets of manuscript; and all around, ranged upon the projections of the rocks, were books, little flasks of oil, baskets of biscuits, while on wooden pegs driven into crevices of the rock hung little baskets containing cheese, fruit, and smoked meat. In one corner, on the ground, was a little cask of light French wine, and a pair of white turtle doves with brown necks and ruby eyes.

“Behind this apartment was another little recess, in the roof of which were openings to admit the air. The good bishop here made a fire every night, which he covered with ashes, so as to keep alive the cinders to warm his cup of coffee in the morning; and as the smoke only issued at night,

it could not betray his retreat, while the cinders, which of course made no smoke, kept the place warm and dry during the day. But what seemed to please him most was a sort of recess which we reached by turning to the left. This the good bishop had made his oratory. Therein stood an altar covered with spotless linen, adorned with artificial Lyonnese flowers, several chandeliers, and a little statue of the Immaculate Virgin in her azure mantle, before which burned day and night a small hanging-lamp, an emblem and figure of the faith which, during all the tumult of the infidel Revolution, burned silently in the breast of every faithful Frenchman. Before the altar stood a *prie-dieu* covered with red cloth, on which the good priest spent many long hours in prayer, lost in profound contemplation, supplicating God to give peace to the world and to grant the triumph of the Church.

“Having shown me his abode, the bishop led me to his chapel and vested himself for Mass, which Father Paul was to serve. I remained kneeling upon the *prie-dieu*, weeping bitter tears at thought of the cruel death of my beloved parents, yet still filled with an ineffable sweetness when recalling the comforting truths that had flowed with such eloquent and soothing power from the lips of that venerable prelate. He seemed to me like the holy popes, Cleto and Callisto, when celebrating Mass in the subterranean Catacombs. His face was radiant, his breast heaving, his head bowed down, his eyes streaming with tears, his voice

sounding solemn in the deep silence of this subterranean grotto among these rugged rocks ; and I thought that Jesus Christ, seated on the right hand of his Father in the highest heavens, disdains not to descend, bringing Paradise into the bowels of the earth, illumining the perpetual night of the cavern with the brightness of divine light, and changing the humble and dreary abode into a supreme and heavenly kingdom, by the infinite honor of his presence. Oh ! at that moment I would not have exchanged this dark and sombre cavern for the most magnificent temples of the noblest Italian cities. Here I felt my whole being reanimated with a strength which exalted me above myself. A celestial light filled my soul, angelic voices sounded in my ears, and I experienced an indescribable sweetness. Therefore, most noble countess, if you are amazed at seeing me thus in peasant garb, working for hire, and at hearing me describe with so much firmness the bitter trials with which it has pleased the Lord to prove me, I can only say that this fortitude came to me as the fruits of that august Sacrifice, the remembrance of that night in the grotto and of the venerable archbishop's holy aspect.

“ When he had finished saying Mass, he knelt down to make his thanksgiving, and Father Paul and I went out of the chapel. The good priest went over to a little earthen furnace in which some live coals were burning, stirred them up, added some more coals, and placed thereon a vessel of water to boil, with which to make his lordship's

coffee. He asked me to take from one of the shelves two little cups or bowls, and place them in readiness upon a tray; then he poured some fresh milk from a bottle he had brought with him into a saucepan, and placed it also upon the fire. Seeing him then unoccupied, my mind reverted to the couch of bear-skin, and I asked him, casting a half-alarmed glance towards it:

“ ‘ Who sleeps in that couch ? ’

“ Then Father Paul, making me sit down on a stool and taking another himself, told me the following incident in a low voice, so as not to disturb the archbishop :

“ ‘ Mademoiselle,’ said he, ‘ that is a child of four or five years old, which his lordship has brought up in this gloomy cavern, and which has often beguiled the time for him with its sweet prattle, and relieved the dreary solitude. A few months after, flying from the persecution which threatened his life, the archbishop had taken refuge here, he went out one night, as is his custom, to breathe the fresh air and elevate his soul to God by gazing upon the grandeur of the starry firmament, and all at once heard, above the noise of the waters, a cry which echoed through the silence of the night. He listened, and heard it again, this time louder and more distinct. He crossed the stream, and as he made his way among the rocks the cry came nearer and nearer. The night was calm, the white light of the full moon was brightening everything, and he saw at a short distance from where he stood, apparently in the shade of a large

tree, a figure, or figures, which occasionally seemed to move. He approached, and found lying upon the ground a young gentlewoman, who wept as she pressed an infant to her heart. The sight of a man at that hour and in these wild regions seemed to alarm her beyond measure. She trembled, stretched out her arms imploringly, and said in a tone of bitter anguish : “Have pity upon an unhappy mother !” His lordship saluted her with the peace of the Lord, and said : “Fear not. God has doubtless sent me to your relief. Then the lady was reassured, and, turning her pallid face to the archbishop, said to him : “I am dying. I recommend to you this orphan child, who is still unconscious of his misfortunes. His father was of the house of Guilhermy ; was guillotined by Robespierre in Paris, his only crime being his nobility and loyalty to the king. In my flight across the Alps, when I had almost reached the frontiers of Piedmont, I fell into the hands of a party of Jacobins, who robbed me of all the money I had about me ; and, not content with this, wounded me cruelly in the side, and, leaving me for dead, rushed on in search of other victims. Bleeding profusely from the wound, and holding my child by the hand, I dragged myself along, hoping to reach some peasant’s hut ; but I feel that I have been led thither to die.”

“Then his lordship tried to raise her, but her pulse was growing weaker. He exhorted her to offer up her life to God for justice’ sake ; made known to her that he was a priest ; pro-



mised to take every care of her child, and then heard her confession; after which, commending her soul to God, the pious lady expired in the act of kissing the cross, which the bishop held to her lips. Then the archbishop took the child in his arms and carried it into the cavern. The following night, going forth from his retreat, he dug a grave and buried therein the remains of the hapless lady, covering it with earth, and carving a cross upon the tree which shaded it, to mark the place of her interment. And from that time the poor little boy has never seen the light of the sun; he has grown up happily in this cavern, unconscious of the miseries of the world. He has already learned to read, knows his little catechism, amuses himself with the doves, runs around in the recesses of the cavern, knowing no other part of it than that which is lit by the lamp, while his lordship bestows upon him almost maternal care. Happy be who in the school of such sanctity will learn to be faithful to God, and grow up, I trust, worthy of his noble preceptor and of the greatness and nobility of a true French heart.'

“When the archbishop had finished his prayers, he came out to us with a serene and joyous countenance. He insisted that I should partake of his repast, and afterwards said to me:

“ ‘Mademoiselle, you must be exhausted, and certainly have need of a little sleep. You can lie down upon my humble bed, while Father Paul and myself attend to some household affairs and recite our office. As soon as the day breaks, you will set out

upon your journey, accompanied by him. He is curé of the parish of Clavières, upon Monte Ginevra, on the side nearest Piedmont. He will guide you safely. Of one thing only I must warn you—that is, that you keep yourself as much as possible concealed, because the Jacobins will soon invade Savoy, and the poor French fugitives will find themselves in very precarious circumstances.’

“Then the archbishop went out into the other recess of the cavern, where they burned a great log of oak, in order to have plenty of embers for the next morning, while I stretched myself on the poor bed, and, overcome by fatigue and exhaustion, fell into a deep sleep.

“It still wanted an hour of day when I was awakened by hearing the archbishop call my name. I roused myself at once, sprang up, and knelt before the archbishop to ask his blessing. Meanwhile, Father Paul had prepared for me a large cup of coffee, to give me strength for my arduous journey, together with some toasted bread, well buttered. Not content with this thoughtful kindness, my good host filled for me, with his own hands, a basket of biscuit, cheese, and fruit, and I, weeping grateful tears, kissed his hand with filial affection, and set out upon my journey, accompanied by Father Paul. When the dawn broke we were just reaching the summit of the Alps, and saw, as we passed, the habitations of the shepherds, who were already leading their flocks to pasture, whilst their wives and the old men remained at home making cheese and butter. We stopped at two farms

for news of Antoinette and the rest of our people. I was told that the evening before, a man, accompanied by an old woman and a little girl, had arrived exhausted at the cabin of Sandrone,\* where they had passed the night. I need not describe our joy at meeting again after our sorrowful separation; but my father's valet-de-chambre made a poor attempt at cheerfulness, and, out of consideration for us, said nothing of the death of our parents. He even went so far as to tell me, when I asked for tidings of them, that they had taken another road and would meet us in the first hamlet of the valley of Luzerne. Father Paul brought us all to his presbytery, where he treated us with kind and courteous hospitality; and then we took counsel as to what was best for us to do, in order to profit by the archbishop's advice.

“Then the good pastor considered, with great wisdom and foresight, the aspect of things and the probabilities for the future, and it was resolved that we should for the present lead a pastoral life among the mountains, deciding that it was the only means to take, until some safe opportunity might present itself of making ourselves known to the Princess of Sardinia, Maria Clotilda, my god-mother. The worthy pastor arranged with Sandrone that Antoinette and her nurse should remain with him, while I was installed with old Martino to take care of his flocks, the valet remaining with Father Paul, so as to keep his eyes open for any changes

\* Sandrone seems to be like big Alexander.

that might occur, and to be near us in order to attend to all our wants. So I became an Alpine shepherdess, living in those wild regions, taking care of my flocks, weeping in my solitude over the memory of the terrible misfortunes which have befallen our family, and lamenting the great distance which separates me from Gaston and my brother, the perils which surround them, and the dangers to which they are exposed in the army of La Vendée.”





## CHAPTER XIII.

### GASTON.

“A FEW months after,” continued Clotilde, “at the change of the season, old Martino resolved to send his flocks to the fertile pastures of Monte Cenisio, under the care of Matteo, his eldest son, and his young bride Ermelinda, the fairest as well as the best and most industrious maiden in the village. She was very much attached to me, and by her entreaties induced her father-in-law to consent to my accompanying her. Meanwhile, Nanni, the faithful valet, had, by his persevering efforts, contrived to send a letter to my brother, giving him an account of the cruel death of our parents, and also tidings of us, of our welfare, and our present dwelling, under the dress and occupation of mountain-peasants, to avoid the republican fury. Gaston, my betrothed, thanked God, who had led me thus safely, and guarded me from the wrath of the wicked, and expressed himself filled with a lively desire to come and watch over my safety, and bring me, if possible, to Venice. Showing letters from the Count d’Artois, which called him into Italy to forward the negotiations of the Austro-Prussian league, he took leave of Larochejacque-



lin's camp, and travelled in disguise to Toulouse, and, having entered the Dauphinate, he crossed the Alps in search of me. He assumed various costumes and characters, now wearing the uniform of a National Guard, again that of a courier, another time that of a chamois hunter, or the embroidered costume of an inspector of forests, which he quickly changed for the rude garb of a wood-cutter—the goat-skin coat and buckskin gaiters. In spite of all these disguises he ran great risks in the inns and in the solitary paths, and more than once had some narrow escapes among Girondists, Marseillais, and other still more furious republicans; but with the help of God he contrived to escape them and avoid falling into their clutches.

“The greatest danger which he encountered on the way, and the greatest consolation which he experienced in all his wanderings, were in an event which occurred in a valley of the Lower Alps, at the crossing of a stream.

“Just as he reached the ford he found himself surrounded by a party of the Jacobins, in appearance the fiercest and most cruel he had ever seen; for, having observed him riding towards them upon a wretched nag, they advanced and pointed their carbines at his breast, crying :

“‘Halt, there ! dog of an aristocrat.’

“Gaston, in spite of the terrible danger which menaced him, betrayed no alarm, but answered with the utmost coolness :

“‘Ho, ho ! comrades, look me well in the face. Have I the snout of an aristocrat? I wish I had

hold of a dozen of those ugly toads ; I wager you I'd rip their bowels open. Come on, let us cross the stream, and we may fall in with some of them. How fares your pocket ?'

“ ‘Cleaned to the last sou,’ cried the ruffians ; ‘everything went the other night at the Guillotine Inn, playing against two cut-throat priests, who fleeced us, because we were as drunk as hogs.’

“ ‘Good ! We'll drink to the guillotine's glittering blade,’ cried Gaston. ‘Come on, comrades, to the nearest tavern.’

“ My betrothed rode before these wretches for about a quarter of an hour, till they met three men and a lady waiting on the bank for a boat which was to take them across. The ruffians perceived them from afar, and began to shout :

“ ‘Ha ! ha ! the herons are going to take a dip. They have the muzzles of sneaking royalists flying from Liberty and Equality. To the water with them !’

“ ‘Water ! Who talks of water ?’ cried one fiercer than the others. ‘Blood is what we want. I am thirsty.’

“ And the wretches rushed towards the hapless travellers to arrest them in their flight. Seeing them approach like a pack of wolves, the poor royalists gave themselves up for dead. One of them, with a gleam of hope, cried out :

“ ‘Do not harm us, citizens ; here are our purses,’ holding them out as he spoke.

“ Gaston recognized among these pallid faces that of one of his dearest friends, the young Count de

Thionville, who was flying with his wife, the gentle and pious Juliette. My betrothed trembled in every limb, but, feigning not to recognize them, he sprang from his horse, rushed furiously upon De Thionville, seized him by the throat, and, with a terrible scowl, cried in a voice of thunder :

“ ‘Traitor ! give up your purse.’ ”

“ But as he made feint of robbing him he contrived to whisper :

“ ‘Thionville, take my horse ; mount with your wife and fly.’ ”

“ Then leaving him, he turned to his comrades and threw on the ground before them a handful of louis-d’or, saying :

“ ‘Here is some of his plunder. It is yours.’ ”

“ And whilst the villains, like vampires, gloated over the gold, De Thionville, in the twinkling of an eye, sprang on to Gaston’s horse, drew his wife on in front of him, and set off at full gallop.

“ ‘Thief ! dog !’ cried the ruffians. ‘Quick, fire upon them ! shoot them !’ ”

“ ‘No,’ cried Gaston in feigned fury, ‘they are my prey. I will take them alive ; I will cut them into pieces ; I will make sausages of them.’ ”

“ And he set out in pursuit of them, crying as he went :

“ ‘Stop, dogs ! Ah ! wretches, I will catch you.’ ”

“ And he thus continued his furious course. The others, busy plundering the unfortunates who remained, allowed Gaston to run on. Urged by fear and the desire of saving his friend, he seemed to have wings to his feet, and was soon out of the

villains' sight. Reaching a spot where the river became a narrow channel, full of fragments of rock, he sprang from one to another till he reached the opposite shore. He then saw De Thionville, who had crossed the ford and was proceeding up the mountain.

“Taking a cross-road which shortened the distance, he approached him and called :

“ ‘Stop, Thionville ! I am your friend Gaston.’ ”

“Thionville at once recognized him and stopped. In the impetuosity of his course, the count had not perceived that Juliette, whom he was holding on the horse with one arm, had fainted and seemed as if she were dead. This circumstance considerably tempered the joy of the two friends. They lifted her off the horse, and scarcely had she touched the ground when she seemed to revive, and they were enabled to bring her into a cabin which chanced to be near.

“My betrothed at length reached the cabins of Monte Ginevra, and made every effort to discover our whereabouts. After many enquiries, it was suggested that the curé might give him some information regarding us. He went to the presbytery and asked for Father Paul ; but it chanced that on that very evening he had gone to the cave of the archbishop to bring him provisions and letters from his vicars, and receive his answers, which could only be transmitted by stealth. By persevering questions Gaston succeeded in discovering from the priest's servant that we were somewhere on Monte Cenis. He asked no more. That very

night he set out by the most solitary and inaccessible paths, in order to shorten the road. Ah! madame, would that he had not done so. If he had only waited for Father Paul, he would have received all necessary directions, and have easily found his way to us; but God, in his inscrutable wisdom, when we fancy ourselves at the goal of our desires, often cuts short our career.

“Gaston wandered till dawn, through various paths which led among the forests and valleys. All at once he arrived at a spot which lay between the woods of Beillard and those of Piereau, and which skirted on a ravine stretching all the length of two steep and rugged rocks. In the shade of one of these rocks was a little patch of meadow, smooth and level as a carpet of green velvet, not more than a stone’s-throw in length, and surrounded by a hedge of brambles, and a rustic fence and gate formed of branches, within which was a little path leading to a straw-covered cabin. Just without this poor dwelling, sitting upon a stone, was a venerable anchorite, hoary and bent with years. His head was covered with a large hood, which almost concealed his emaciated face and sunken eyes. He wore a long white beard reaching almost to his knees. One hand rested upon a staff or crutch, the other held an open book. Gaston, thinking that the old man might direct him on his way, turned aside, opened the gate, entered, and saluted him. The hermit did not look up from the book till he had reached the end of the chapter; then, without raising his head, which was



bowed down from age and infirmity, but glancing at Gaston from under his brows, and slightly parting his lips, he said in a slow and sepulchral voice :

“ ‘ I feel the odor of death. The old Duke de Brissac obtained the pardon of his sins, because he was martyred by the impious for being a knight and a Christian. Thou hast fought in La Vendée for Christ and for thy king. Jesus has mercy on thee, and would save thee. About two hours’ journey from here, amid the overhanging slopes of Dora, is the Abbey of Novalesa. Go, confess your sins to a monk whom you will find in the Chapel of St. Benedict ; receive, communicate at the altar of the Lord. The peace of God be with you ! ’

“ Gaston stood amazed and bewildered at the hermit’s words ; but, recovering himself, he asked a number of questions, to which the hermit made no reply, but tranquilly continued his reading. At last, in a voice still lower and more hollow than at first, he repeated :

“ ‘ I feel an odor of death. Depart, O duke ! for time presses. ’

“ Gaston, seeing that he could obtain no other response, went on his way towards the Abbey of Novalesa, a thousand varied thoughts succeeding each other in his mind. Wearied and exhausted by his journey over rocky paths and almost inaccessible steeps, he reached the abbey, and, without stopping at the monastery, he entered the church, made his adoration, and looked around for the

monk mentioned by the hermit. In the Chapel of St. Benedict, prostrate upon the altar steps, he saw a pale, emaciated religious, in frock, cowl, and cloak. His face was hidden in his hands; he was motionless, scarcely seeming to breathe, absorbed in meditation. Gaston observed him for some time, and meanwhile examining his conscience, asking pardon of God for his sins with humble and contrite heart, and feeling a strong desire to make his confession. After a short time the monk, heaving a deep sigh, wiped away the tears which fell from his eyes, and arose like a man awaking from a dream. Gaston approached him respectfully, and asked him to have the charity to hear his confession.

“The monk looked at him, and perceived that he was travel-worn and exhausted.

“‘Whither do you come, good youth?’ asked he.

“‘From Monte Ginevra,’ replied Gaston.

“‘Although you are apparently young and vigorous, you must be extremely fatigued after your long journey; therefore you had better partake of some refreshment, and then I will hear your confession, in the name of God.’

“So saying, the monk led Gaston to the guest-chamber of the monastery, and offered him some excellent wine and confections. The monk was a man of middle age, yet his hair was thickly strewn with gray. He was of noble and gracious presence, in spite of the long fasts, severe vigils, and a life of rigorous penance, which had worn him

away, and reduced him so that he seemed to have nothing more than skin upon his bones. As Gaston sat down beside the Benedictine, he could not refrain from admiring this living image of the gentleness and suavity of Christ, and he felt inspired with such confidence that he was at once disposed to open his heart to him; therefore, taking heart, he related all that had happened, and what the venerable hermit had predicted, asking if he chanced to know him.

“ ‘Oh! he is a very celebrated person,’ replied the monk, ‘in all the neighboring valleys, and I am in nowise astonished that he spoke to you of the future, for he is considered in the country as a prophet. However, you must not allow yourself to be too much alarmed; for these prophets of God, when they do not announce the day and the hour, often predict future events as present, and things distant as near at hand. However, you will do well to make a general confession; but, after all, you need have no fear, nor suppose that your death is near. I must tell you that our old hermit is over ninety, and has lived for more than sixty years in that hermitage, cut off from all intercourse with the world. On Easter, Pentecost, the Assumption, and Christmas he comes and passes two nights at the abbey, watching before the Blessed Sacrament, confesses, receives Communion, and departs again.

“ ‘In his youth our hermit was a most elegant and favored esquire of King Amadeus II., and is descended from the lords De la Chambre, a noble

family of Savoy. None amid that splendid court appeared to greater advantage than he ; none was more adroit in games of skill, gayer at the revels, more daring in the chase, or more sprightly in the dance. He loved a young lady of the house of Valperga with a deep and ardent love, and the Sire de Campiglione was his rival with the object of his affections. It chanced that at the hunt of Veneria, summoned by the king, all the gentlemen, knights, and noble ladies were assembled, mounted on superb palfreys. De la Chambre, esquire to the king, rode beside his royal master. A noble stag being started, the esquire put spurs to his horse, and set out in pursuit of it, while all the noble company dispersed themselves over the country. De la Chambre very soon became separated from the hunt, and got deeper and deeper into the forest, hoping to overtake the animal. All at once he heard a loud rustling in a thick clump of trees. Supposing that it was the deer, the young lord took aim and fired ; then, springing from his horse, he rushed into the brushwood, and came to the place at which his shot was fired. But, alas ! instead of the stag, he discovered that he had mortally wounded the Sire de Campiglione, who had dismounted and placed himself in ambush, hoping to surprise the stag. At this sight De la Chambre remained rooted to the spot. Campiglione lay motionless. The esquire, supposing him dead, was filled with horror, and, kneeling beside him, called him by name ; then, with a broad silken scarf which he wore around his waist, he set him-

self to stanch the blood flowing from a wound in the side. At this juncture the king, with several knights and ladies, rode up to the spot. Knowing the rivalry which existed between the two young men, Amadeus, at sight of the wounded knight, cast an angry glance at De la Chambre. The ladies alighted from their horses, and surrounded Campiglione, endeavoring to dress his wound as best they might, and binding it with their handkerchiefs. Four of the huntsmen raised Campiglione to their arms to carry him to the nearest place of shelter. De la Chambre stated the case, swore he was innocent, then, in the midst of the tumult which followed, mounted his horse and rode away, and from that fatal moment they could obtain no tidings of him, to the great regret of the king and the whole court. He rode on towards the rugged heights of Rochemellon, and thence through the depths of the gloomy forests of Verney, till he found the solitary ravine, beside which he erected his little hermitage. Thus apart from the world and separated from every one, he began his long and rigorous penance, in which he has persevered for over sixty years'.

“When the Benedictine had finished the story of the hermit, he brought Gaston through the various parts of the abbey, telling him as they went ancient legends connected with it.

“‘For more than a thousand years,’ exclaimed he as they passed through the cloisters, ‘have the monks raised night and day to God their humble supplications, beseeching him to look down in



mercy upon Italy, and keep far from her the scourges of wars and invasions. O young Frenchman! I fear that the sins of Italy have almost filled the measure of God's justice, and already I see the horrors of the Revolution approaching the Alps, and rebellious France bringing ruin to our peaceful countries. Every night from the loftiest peak of Col di Ferret I behold blood-red meteors darting through the firmament, and a gigantic figure, whose head reaches to the clouds, appearing in their midst. With warning shake of the head he turns towards our country. In his right hand he grasps a flaming sword, and brandishes it threateningly, pointing it towards the heart of Italy. Pray to God, young Frenchman, to avert this evil augury and to turn to good this portentous sign.'

"Then they entered the church, and, after a few moments' prayer, the Benedictine heard Gaston's confession. The morning following Gaston heard Mass and received of the Body of Christ, and, cordially thanking his benevolent host, he set out towards the pastures of Envers, where I was minding my flocks.

"Having got as far as Ferrerie, and obtained some further information concerning the road to the Alps by the steepest and most rugged paths, in order to shorten the way—unmindful that only practised hunters accustomed to these mountains could overcome the obstacles presented by these almost inaccessible peaks—after long wanderings he reached the formidable glaciers of Fezan. He

was not, however, disheartened, but bravely and daringly ventured among their glittering heights, surrounded by dense mists which completely enshrouded their summits. A fierce north wind blew directly in his face; his ears were deafened by the awful crash of the falling glaciers as they were dashed into fragments in the depths of the abyss. Alone and lost in the midst of this frozen nature, and terrified by the roar of torrents in an ocean of clouds which chased each other in quick succession, a heart of bronze would have felt its courage fail. But the intrepid and undaunted Gaston, urged by his love for me, turned with heroic courage and sought another road, hoping to reach the cabins of Arzella or of Villard. He had already turned his back upon the glaciers, when, at the turning of a great rock, he came to several large caverns or fissures descending gradually from the heights of Cenisio, and through which was echoed the growling of a tempest, which soon broke out with pitiless fury over the rocky steeps. A frozen rain began to fall like a torrent, pouring in through these openings, while awful noises shook the mountains and resounded in the gloomy valleys. My poor betrothed, surprised by this cataclysm, which seemed to announce the destruction of the universe, thought his last hour had come, and, unable to resist the impetuosity of these furious winds, threw himself face downwards, and crawled painfully towards a crevasse of the rock, in which he sought to shelter himself as best he could from the fury of the united elements.

“His travelling companion, who had followed him faithfully in this fearful journey, was a little English dog with long ears and shaggy hair. He pressed the animal to his breast, and the little beast kept him warm, and with his hot breath prevented his face from being frozen. Here poor Gaston waited, hoping that the storm would abate; but it continued in all its fury till the night came down. He shuddered with horror when he thought that he was to die, without seeing me again, in this solitude, in a rocky cavern, without the consolation of one human voice or face, and become the prey of wolves or rapacious vultures. He recommended himself to God, while his limbs began to stiffen with the bitter cold; but he struggled with all strength against an inclination to sleep, which he knew, amid these glaciers, was certain death. His blood began to freeze in his veins, the cold contracted the nerves and muscles, a mist came over his eyes, his head became heavy, his limbs grew rigid, torpor overpowered him, and he slept. Alas! poor Gaston, his feet and legs were already frozen.

“The storm had passed away and the heaven grew serene, and the dawn of the coming day fell calm and clear, brightening the lofty summits of the mountains, and casting her rosy mantle over the eternal snows, the glaciers, and the pastures. I had already quitted our shepherd’s dwelling and led out my flocks to pasture, followed by my large mastiffs, a broad, spiked collar round their necks. The sheep-bells tinkled; my sheep

bleated, calling their lambs. I walked slowly along, saying my prayers; I offered my heart to God, who upon these heights appeared refulgent in glory and terrible in anger, his wrath borne on the wings of eagles through the violence of the storm.

“The sun was already rising above the heights of Lansleburg, whose shadows were reflected on the opposite slopes of Cenisio, and the air began to lose something of its extreme rigor, when, having given the signal for pasture, I seated myself on a rock, and, taking from my basket a skein of wool and the needles, began to knit, without losing sight of my sheep, lest they might wander away. I soon perceived that one of my dogs, Sultan, kept running towards the valley, which lay close beside the spot. Behind him ran Lion, the other dog, both with their noses to the ground, as if they scented a bear or a wild goat. They began to growl, rushed towards the rocks, and began to bark with all their might. I rose and called them, but the dogs, who were usually obedient, did not listen to me, but, with their eyes fixed upon a cleft in the rock, continued barking.

“I supposed that a stag or game of some kind had taken refuge therein, and I went to see. As I drew near I heard what seemed to be a cry of fright. I hurried forward towards the fissure, and I saw—O my God!—the rigid figure of a young man, his limbs contracted, his chin resting upon a little dog, so that his face was partly concealed. His eyes fixed themselves on my face, he

recognized me, revived a little, the blood coming back to his heart, and he exclaimed :

“ ‘ Clotilde ! . . . My God, I thank thee ! . . . Now I can die content ! ’ ”

“ At these words, which he uttered after a violent effort, I recognized him in my turn, and a cry of pity and horror escaped from my lips :

“ ‘ Gaston ! you here ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Clotilde,’ answered he with still greater difficulty, ‘ I cannot rise ; my limbs are frozen. ’ ”

“ Without a moment’s delay I called the dogs. I made one of them lie like a cushion on his knees, another on his breast, and, taking his hands, put them inside their jaws. It would seem that these beasts understood the benevolent action which they performed, for they looked at him caressingly while they gently licked his hands. I took off my cloak, and, raising Gaston a little, I put it round him ; but seeing that my poor betrothed was unable to move, and as I had none to aid me, I took courage, and without more ado raised him in my arms and turned from the pasture, leaving the dogs to mind my flocks, as I usually did whenever I had occasion to leave them alone.

“ Such was my anxiety that I scarcely felt the dear burden. I ran towards the largest cabin, which I very soon approached. A man who was making cheese perceived me coming up the mountain path, ran to my assistance, and would have taken Gaston from my arms. I would not permit this, but, carrying him myself to the cabin, I laid him upon the bed of one of the shepherds, all



of whom, leaving their work, surrounded me with words of sympathy, offering every assistance in their power. But when they had undressed him, they perceived the yellow color diffused over his limbs, and that the joints were perfectly rigid ; and they saw that his feet were lost. Then an old man said :

“ ‘ A bath of warm milk will revive him and bring back the blood quicker than anything else.’ ”

“ Pouring a large kettle of the boiling milk into a tub, and having had Gaston lifted by two strong young men, he plunged the frozen members into the tub and covered them with a rug. The heat softly penetrating his body, Gaston fell tranquilly asleep, while with a rabbit-skin I slowly and gently rubbed his arms and chest, which began to regain the natural pinkish tint ; but after two hours’ immersion life had not come back to his lower limbs. Then he was put to bed, and some nourishment was given him, after which he began to relate his adventures, which I have already told you.

“ I kept him constantly enveloped in lamb-skin. I never left his bedside day or night, often making them give him a foot-bath of hot wine. I heated bricks, over which I sprinkled vinegar, to try if these fumigations would be of any service. But old Titon, who was the oldest herdsman in the place, and who knew something of medicine, and had cured several shepherds frozen in the storms (which they called *tormente* \*), seeing that every

\* Torment or trouble.

remedy was unavailing, said to the other herdsmen :

“ ‘That poor youth, if the truth must be told, has not long to live.’

“ They all concealed this from me, however, and at evening, when the shepherds returned to their cabins and gathered around the fire for prayers, Titon, who was our chorister, made the little boys and girls kneel before the statue of the Virgin, round which he had lit a number of little tapers, and made them sing the litany for poor Gaston. My good betrothed was deeply touched, and while the innocent little children sang their hymns he wept tears of compunction, turning towards the Madonna and offering her his whole heart.

“ After supper Titon sent the children to bed. The young shepherds soon followed his example, and, as he saw that I was going to remain, the old man said :

“ ‘Go to bed, Clotilde ; I will call you two hours after midnight, and then you can watch beside the youth.’

“ ‘So I went to bed, but I did not sleep, and spent all the time in prayer, till I saw Titon approach to call me ; then I rose and went to Gaston. During the short time I had been away mortification had spread, and Gaston was much changed. He was holding in his hands a little crucifix which the old shepherd had given him ; he had a pair of beads round his neck, and a picture of the Mother of Sorrows was pinned to the foot of his bed, where his loving glances might fall upon it.

“ I felt my heart sink when Titon exhorted him to put all his trust in the Blood of Christ, which redeemed him, and in the protection of Mary, our advocate at the throne of God. Gaston’s face shone with the holy love which brightened his dying features; but my sorrow became intense when I thought that my good and cherished lover would never live to be my husband and protector. Whilst I moistened his lips with a feather dipped in honey, Gaston regarded me with great sweetness and said :

“ ‘ Clotilde, I am dying. God is taking me away, and separates us before we were united. His holy will be blessed. This great sacrifice will obtain us the grace to meet again in heaven, where there is no more death, and where we will love God eternally. Clotilde, moisten my lips again, and give me the image of the Mother of Sorrows, that I may press it to my heart.’

“ I gave him the picture; he gazed upon it for some time, a livid pallor spread over his face, his lips closed, and, kissing once more the image of Mary, he died with it pressed to his lips. The shepherds—”

But here Clotilde, in spite of all her efforts to seem calm and resigned, exhausted and overcome by emotion, fell in a faint. The countess sprinkled her with cold water, held her vinaigrette to her nose, till she recovered consciousness, and then said to her :

“ Clotilde, you and your sister Antoinette must remain with me henceforward, and I will be your

mother, your sister, and your friend. God, who has given you strength and constancy to suffer so much, will accord you, in the abundance of his loving mercy, the sweetest consolations; for the Lord indeed is good."





## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE INCORONATA.

THE Count d'Almavilla passed many pleasant days with his friends at Ala, and, always accompanied by some of them, made various excursions over the mountains of these delicious and most fertile Alps, which, in one part of the Val Lagarina, extend to the confines of the Tyrol and the Veronesian provinces on one side, and to the Adige and the Lake of Garda on the other. He was particularly anxious to see the great heights of Valfredda, over which, in 1701, Prince Eugene of Savoy passed with his Austro-Sardinians in the war of the Succession; there it was he surprised the flank of the Gallo-Spanish army, under Marshal Catinat and the Prince de Vaudemont, who already thought themselves certain of victory at Verona, and expected to reach Vienna unmolested. This passage astounded the world, for the ascent was made with the most daring bravery, regardless of the almost impassable ruggedness of these rocky steeps, and with a numerous detachment of infantry, armed to the teeth, besides cavalry and a train of carriages and artillery. Having thus scaled the mountain heights, they rushed impetu-



ously down the slopes of Soave, Valpolicella, and Valpantena upon the surprised and disconcerted enemy.

The Count d'Almavilla was amazed to hear that an army with artillery and ammunition had forced their way through these deep gorges and narrow defiles by a steep and difficult ascent, and he gloried in being a Piedmontese, and a descendant of those who fought under Prince Eugene, the greatest hero of his age.

What would the count have thought or said could he have seen the heights over which, amid the snows and glaciers of St. Bernard, Prince Eugene passed, with incredible speed, the same force of foot and horse and the same artillery and ammunition, to come down like a torrent upon the countries lying far below? Our contemporaries are amazed at the passage which a hundred years later was made by the great Napoleon when he led the French to victory on the plains of Marengo, and loudly proclaim it the most magnificent feat of arms ever performed; but they do not seem to be aware that Eugene of Savoy was the first to make this passage with a poorly-disciplined army. In his day soldiers still wore the heavy cuirass, and the carriages and artillery were much heavier than in the time of Napoleon; besides this, they were forced to carry with them an endless variety of tents, pavilions, and various implements used in the camp. And observe the very admission which Napoleon himself made at St. Helena—that from his youth he had constantly studied the campaigns and the

various strategies of Eugene of Savoy, and endeavored to imitate and follow him in his various artifices, in the velocity of his marches and counter-marches, and his daring stratagems. Napoleon's manœuvres on the Mincio and on the Adige are merely repetitions of the campaigns of Eugene, who a hundred years before, in these same places and by the same means, gained important victories over the French. Have Beaulieu, Wurmser, Alvinzy, and the other imperial leaders forgotten this ?

After they had come down from Valfredda, Count d'Almavilla expressed a desire, in which he was supported by Lida, to make the ascent to the celebrated sanctuary of the valley of the Adige, called the Madonna della Corona, or the Incoronata. The shrine stands upon a point of rock that rises boldly and daringly, and, remote from all besides, seems more like the eyrie of eagles or the resort of falcons than a human place of resort ; and yet it is even in our own day a pilgrimage for all the nations of the earth, but more especially for the towns and villages of the Tyrol, from the River del Lago, and from the vast territory between the Adige and the Mincio. From this sanctuary flows unspeakable grace and mercy, comfort and consolation, and the most extraordinary cures obtained through the protection and intercession of the great Mother of God.

When Solyman II., in the year 1522, fiercely attacked the city of Rhodes, both by land and sea, and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, sole

masters of the island, defended it with the utmost valor under the command of Villier, grand master of the order, one night some shepherds, who were watching their flocks on the Alpine heights between the Benaco and the Adige, beheld a dazzling light shining through the surrounding rocks. Full of amazement, they called the other shepherds from their cabins, and led them to where they too might behold the wonderful brightness, which extended from the highest peaks down to the deepest valleys. At first they feared it might be a great conflagration of the forests on the wooded slopes of Brentino, but they soon observed that there was none of the lurid glare of a conflagration in the clear, calm light that diffused itself over everything with a mild and steady lustre. They resolved to approach the rocks whence proceeded the great refulgence which had so suddenly burst upon them; they discovered that it seemed to proceed up from some of the deepest and most rugged gorges. Then a daring youth of their number cried, turning to his companions :

“Let me down by a rope to the depths of the valley whence the light appears to proceed, and when I give you the signal draw me up again.”

His companions sought to dissuade him, but he was firm, so they fastened the rope around his waist and let him down into the ravine.

O wonders! No sooner had the shepherd reached the ground, where he found himself in a narrow and rocky defile, than he beheld a statue of white marble, surrounded by rays of unearthly

brightness, and representing the Mother of Sorrows with the divine body of her son Jesus when it was taken from the cross and placed in her lap. The good youth fell upon his knees, prostrated himself in adoration, then gave the signal, was drawn up by the shepherds, and related all that he had seen. Then all the shepherds hastened to procure ropes, and the most courageous were let down from the heights, and, having reached the spot, made a bed of leaves, and, laying thereon the venerated image, drew it to the summit of the mountain, where it was enshrined in a cabin erected for the purpose, and placed upon a sort of rustic pedestal, which they surrounded with innumerable lighted tapers; then several messengers were sent to the Bishop of Verona.

Hearing of this event, numbers of people accompanied the bishop and clergy from Verona. Amongst them was a Knight Hospitaller of Jerusalem, who had no sooner beheld the image than he cried in amazement :

“That is the miraculous Virgin, Our Lady of Pity, so long venerated in the largest temple of our knights in the island of Rhodes.” Then, casting himself at its feet, he exclaimed : “Ah ! the place is lost. The Mother of God wished not to become a prisoner of the unbelieving Mussulmans, and preferred the pure and simple homage of the shepherds.”

Here among the mountains the Blessed Virgin received the homage of all the dwellers of the Alps. The bishop and the knights resolved to raise a tem-

ple in her honor, when all of a sudden she disappeared, to the deep sorrow of the shepherds. But being on the heights at night, they again beheld the self-same light gleaming among the same peaks of the rocks; they descended once more, and found the statue upon the same stone. It was then clear that Mary wished to be venerated among these rocks, and they set about devising means by which her desire should be gratified. About that time the Emperor Charles V. had given the island of Malta to the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, who thenceforward took the name of Knights of Malta; they met in council at Valetta, and decided to erect a church to Mary among these inaccessible rocks. Miners and stone-cutters were let down from the heights to begin their work of smoothing the asperities of the rock. After much labor they succeeded in making a level space broad enough for the majestic basilica and a little house for the chaplain; but, finding that the church would occupy nearly all the space at first designed for the presbytery, and that they could not enlarge it in width, it was proposed to enlarge it in height, and the design was formed of building high towers which would contain several rooms. But when they had begun the work, they saw that it was impossible to carry out their plan, for it was both difficult and dangerous to lower workmen with their tools and materials in baskets from the summit of the mountains. Then it was resolved to have them drawn up from the base of the rocks; they now worked hard with spade and pickaxe, and soon



came face to face with the largest ridge of rock. But having proceeded so far, they found themselves divided from it by a deep abyss, which could only be crossed by a bridge that would have to be thrown over to connect the two sides of the mountain, and would be in itself a difficult and perilous undertaking ; for how was the bridge to be thrown over, where were the foundations to be laid, and how was it to be supported ?

*Si che possa salir, chi va senz' ala.\**

Knowing not, therefore, by what means it could be accomplished, they knelt down and besought Mary to aid them in this undertaking, that would redound to the honor of God and her own. Scarcely had they finished their prayer than they perceived a great oak, which stood so sturdily upon the opposite pile of rocks, gently bend the great bulk of its leaf-covered boughs, and, having torn its roots from the earth, stretch itself over the abyss to the heights beyond, forming a broad and solid bridge. The most daring ventured out upon the gigantic trunk and branches of the tree, and crossed in safety. Thus they were finally enabled, with great labor, to plant the arches of the bridge, and make an easy path to the hitherto inaccessible rocks which the Mother of God had chosen for her abode. It was, however, necessary to make a road leading from the valley to the summit of the mountain, and it was finally decided to cut a stairway of incalculable height in the rugged sides of the rock. This stairway reached

\* He who can climb needeth not wings (Dante, "Purgatorio," canto iii.)

from the highest crest to the lowest depth ; at every twenty or thirty steps was a platform, upon which was erected a sort of covered bower or resting-place, with seats. These little white pavilions, rising at intervals up the rugged steep, presented a singular and beautiful spectacle.

The church is built of large, square stones ; a broad flight of steps leads up to it from the bridge, giving easy access to the majestic structure ; and the rugged mountain heights which rise above, around, and at its base are of the color of iron, while the shrine, seen from the Adige and from the Tyrolean road, appears like a white star among the dark rocks ; hence those who sail along the river upon their heavily-laden rafts, at an unexpected turn of the valley catching a glimpse of the white temple far on the heights above, intone the litany in Mary's honor.

One clear, beautiful morning the Pizzinis, with the count, his daughter, and Lida, set out from the villa of Peri, one of the domains of the house of Casa, where they had been most courteously entertained by Lord Pietropaolo. They proceeded towards the Adige, which they were to cross in a boat ; then they began the ascent of the mountain, anxious to reach the shrine as soon as possible ; but when they had climbed about a hundred steps of the stairs, the young ladies, heated and wearied, were obliged to take a little rest upon the benches of one of the pavilions, and thus had an opportunity to enjoy the wild and rugged scene. D'Almavilla, thanks to his Voltairean scepticism, felt not

within his heart the lofty sentiments of admiration and reverence at sight of these gigantic rocks, that had become the recourse of so many pilgrims, who make the difficult ascent most lovingly, and lay their votive offerings before the Mother of God, the fountain of grace, consolation, and help amid the trials which assail the human breast; but this vain and heartless man climbed the rocks, jeering and mocking at religious fanaticism, which, not content with level plains, must carry its superstition to the height of these steep and precipitous mountains. And, as is usual with the impious, who always endeavor to spread the poison of their views around them, the Count d'Almavilla turned to Pietropaolo Poli, who had accompanied them, and said:

“These mountainers must count a great deal on our credulity to plant this eagle's or falcon's nest yonder among those peaks. But it is nevertheless an ancient custom, for the religion of the Assyrians, Idumeans, Phœnicians, and the Gentiles of Palestine was always celebrated on the heights; and the higher and more unattainable the site of their worship, it seemed to them that Baal, Camos, Dagon, and Tammuz would be the more delighted. The Christians frequently imitate these absurd ceremonies of the Gentiles.”

Pietropaolo Poli was a man of the *Credo Vecchio*,\* as they called those Christians who were firm and unshaken in their faith · and though his

\* Ancient belief. or ancient faith.

manner was most perfect in gentleness and courtesy, he did not hesitate to show his displeasure when any one chanced to speak slightly of God and his saints, and he was not just the one to whom it was safest to address disparaging remarks against the Church. We can well imagine what he thought of this sally of Alnavilla's, and how brusquely he turned to him.

“My dear count,” said he, “you had better leave such impious nonsense to Voltaire and that other atheist, Volney, who returned from his travels in the East to deluge us with his obscene wickedness, which he tells us in his ‘Ruins’ he found among Asiatic monuments, and that were in reality manufactured in his own impious brain in Paris. A Catholic gentleman should not permit himself, even in jest, to repeat such utter absurdities, and say that Christians have imitated the Gentiles in their sacred rites. It is true, my lord, the primitive nations of the East had many ceremonies similar to ours; but those who make such observations do not consider that, though they have lost the true knowledge of God, they yet retain clearly and distinctly many of the patriarchal traditions which, since the beginning of the world, by the divine revelation were made a light and a guide unto men, and confided to them by the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. It is true they were aware that God loved to be adored upon the heights of mountains. The first sacrifice made by Noe when he came out of the ark was upon the mountains of Armenia; that of his only son which God de-

manded of Abraham was upon Mount Moria ; he gave the Mosaic laws to his chosen people upon the summits of Sinai. And now, count, let me ask you if the Gentiles, with their worship upon mountains, were imitated by the true believers. What do you think ? ”

“ I think,” replied the count, “ that it is all superstition, because God is present everywhere and in all things ; for him there is neither height nor depth.”

“ Yes, but the Lord is admirable upon the heights—*Mirabilis in altis Dominus*’\*—and his Sion of delight is built upon the holy mountains : ‘The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains.’ † And Mary, who is his spouse, also loves to be honored on the slopes and summits of mountains. She tells us she was exalted on the heights of Libanus and Mount Sion : ‘ I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus, and as a cypress-tree on Mount Sion.’ ‡ Hence she loves to dwell upon the summits of Carmel, Hermon, and Sanir, and her Beloved comes to seek her, ‘leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills,’ and invites her to the crown of the sublime heights: ‘Come, thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.’ § After that let Volney, with his learned absurdity, declare that Christian shrines venerated upon mountain-tops are relics of paganism ! ”

\* Psalm 92.

† Psalm 86.

‡ Eccl. xxiv.

§ Canticles.



While Pietropaolo thus rebuked the count, Lida enjoyed it, Lauretta made contemptuous faces, the rest of the party were silent, the count feigned abstraction and muttered :

“ It is impossible to touch this porcupine without being pricked by his quills.”

Thus reasoning, they arrived at the steps of the church, and, when they had ascended them, looked again over the great stretch of terrible precipices and the deep, rocky gorges ; then they entered the church. The holy place breathed silence, reverence, and love ; the red curtains, lowered over the windows, diffused a dim yet rosy light, which cast fantastic shadows through the vaulted arches, the dimness brightened here and there by the glimmering light from lamps that burned before the miraculous statue of Our Lady. Groups of pilgrims gathered eagerly around the divine Empress of Heaven, whose image bore the impress of bitter sorrow when she had reached the rugged heights of grief and maternal anguish as the dear body of her crucified, only Son was laid in her lap to receive her last farewell before it was hidden from her loving eyes by the closing of the sepulchre.

The solemn silence was broken from time to time by the sighs and supplications of the poor mountaineers, who, kneeling before her, with the baskets containing their offerings at her feet, raised their hands to Mary, and, weeping, recommended to her the cure of a father, the life of a dying son, or the speedy release of a husband detained in prison, or the bread wherewith to sustain their

families during the long winter. Few hearts are so hard as to remain unmoved by the example of these simple souls turning with such confident trust to the maternal love of Mary, our most sweet advocate at the throne of God.

Scarcely had the strangers entered the church and knelt in adoration at the railing of the high altar, where stood the sacred image of Mary, when they saw the priest coming out to say Mass, followed by an elderly lady, a fair and gentle young lady, a little child, and a gentleman of noble appearance, who took their places on a bench beside the altar. At the moment of communion all except the little child received the Blessed Sacrament with edifying fervor and recollection; the ladies wept tears of holy emotion. When the Mass was ended, before leaving the altar the priest bent down to the child kneeling at his feet, dipped his fingers into the lamp which burned before Mary, and made the sign of the cross with the oil upon her forehead, reciting over her some prayers.

Soon after our party entered the chapter-house, where their breakfast was served. It consisted of ham, roast veal, bread and butter, and pastry, all of which had been sent from Peri, with some good Vin Santo belonging to the Poli family.\* While waiting for their coffee, they saw the party who had received communion entering the room. They were invited to breakfast, as was proper un-

\* This family were very proud of their Vin San'o, which was beyond doubt the best in the country. In their cellar was a cask one hundred years old which was almost like balm.

der the circumstances. The cordial invitation was accepted with the same grace with which it was given. Signor Pietropaolo served every one, beginning with the strange lady.

It was at once evident that the stranger and the priest who had celebrated Mass were French. Giovanni Taddei then asked courteously if the lady and her family were not among those who had been obliged to leave France in consequence of the desolating Revolution.

“You are right, signor,” replied the lady; “we are indeed, as you say, refugees, and we came to this celebrated sanctuary of Mary Immaculate to supplicate the divine Mercy, through her intercession, to turn aside the scourges of his purifying justice from our unhappy country, and also to testify our gratitude, by every means in our power, to the great Virgin for the cure of our son, who was saved from the very verge of the grave through her mediation.”

“Yet he seems perfectly well,” said the rector of the church, who was also at the table with us; “and, in fact, we would never suspect he had been ill.”

“We were going to Bologna,” replied the lady, “and he was taken with a violent fever, followed by a general derangement of the system, so that he was swollen from head to foot and confined to bed for several months. I can never forget the kindness of the Bolognese ladies during all this time; the noblest of them, of the families of the Bentivoglio, Malvasia, Ranuzzi, Malvezzi, Pepoli, Ma-

nara, and many others, visited me frequently, and paid me every attention. But I think I owe the life of my child, in a special manner, to that noble and venerable man of God, the Abbé Joseph Pignatelli, a Spanish ex-Jesuit. He came often to see me, and sought by every means to console me in the pains and trials of exile. His speech was so full of fervor and heavenly sweetness that he restored to my heart all that confidence in God which a Christian should never lose. One evening, I remember, I was in great need of money, having long since sold all my jewels. Father Joseph, who had come in as usual and seated himself beside my sick child's bed, having caressed my little Henri and given him his blessing, exhorted me to have recourse to Mary for his cure and make her a vow. At the entrance of other visitors the abbé hastened to depart. While I was conversing with my friends, Henri began to cry, and, calling me, said that that long, lean priest had hurt his leg. I at once began to look for the cause of his pain, and at length felt a hard, heavy substance pressing upon his little leg. What could it be? It was a great roll of Spanish gold doubloons which the holy man had slipped into the bed, hoping that I would think it a present from some of the ladies; for thus he always endeavored to conceal his good works.

“I followed the good priest's advice. I promised to make a pilgrimage to one of the shrines of Our Lady, and my child was cured. Father Joseph's generous assistance enabled us to reach Verona, where we had a relative who had been living there

some months, and, being unable to go to the Madonna di San Luca, at Bologna, I came thither to accomplish my vow."\*

All her noble listeners heard the lady's story with great pleasure, and Lida, turning to her with a winning smile, asked :

"Why did the priest make the sign of the cross with oil, from the lamp before the Blessed Virgin's altar, upon the forehead of that pretty child, who, I presume, signora, is your daughter? Is she also ill?"

"She is not my daughter," replied the lady, "she is my cousin. She is the last scion of the illustrious race whence sprang Marshal de Turanne, and she is the daughter of my paternal aunt. The Vicomte Chlodoald, the father of Beatrice, held an important office at the court. Her mother was one of the first ladies of honor to the queen. This couple lived magnificently at Paris, where their great wealth and high position at the court placed them in the first rank of society.

"When Necker was entrusted with the financial affairs of the realm, the vicomte, who was a man

\*The same lady related this anecdote of Father Joseph's charity to Father Jourdan, a Portuguese Jesuit, who told it to us at Genoa, where he had done so much good for many years by his zeal, especially as he knew almost all the European languages. The revolutionists of 1848 persecuted him shamefully. They hung him in effigy, and his image was drawn on a bier through all parts of the city and covered with the utmost opprobrium. He had a special gift for the conversion of Protestants, of whom he reconciled numbers with the Church at Petersburg, London, Paris, and in many other cities of Italy and Germany. He was almost dying when driven from Turin. He arrived at Nizza, where he drew his last breath, and went to receive the reward of his virtues.



of great judgment and ability, and never stooped to be a flatterer, spoke his mind freely enough to King Louis, pointing out the ruin to which Necker was leading the kingdom of France, and openly accusing the two other ministers, De Maurepas and De Calonne, of weakness and complicity. Things went so far that Uncle Chlodoald, who saw that his efforts to prevent the ruin of the kingdom were unavailing, and that the rebels became every day more daring, resolved to quit the court as quietly as possible, left Paris with his whole family, and retired into one of his castles in Touraine."

"It was certainly the best thing he could do," said Antonio Pizzini. "When the great lords of the court had lost the true French spirit, and having cast themselves head foremost into Voltairean philosophy, proved to France in the first National Assembly that they were weak and disloyal of heart; and not reflecting that, by lessening the royal prerogative, they increased the privileges of the nobility, they became, without suspecting it, the tools of the third estate, that is to say, of those who were rousing the populace to fury."

"You are right," said the Marquis René. "My uncle was not, however, amongst those senseless men who attacked the prerogative of the crown."

"On the contrary," resumed the Marchioness Lavinie, "I cannot tell you how often I have heard the vicomte condemning the folly of those noblemen who dug with their own hands the abyss into which they fell, dragging others with them in their fall. Having taken possession of

his domain, Chlodoald's whole time was spent in laboring for the welfare of his tenantry. He dispensed his benefits with a bountiful hand, while seeking to promote piety towards God and fidelity to the king. But the evil spirit of the times was spreading fast, and to such an extreme was public perversity carried that virtue was considered a crime, and punished as rebellion against the offended majesty of the people. Already the French people (usually so good) had become so brutal that the profession of piety, charity, and Christian benevolence offended them most deeply."

"What do you say, signora?" exclaimed the good rector. "Can it be possible that they have reached such a depth of folly and absurdity? Virtue a crime! O ever Blessed Virgin Mary! I am amazed."

"Ah! reverend sir," replied the lady, "you are behind the age here among your rocks. These doctrines are being propagated in all the cities of Italy, turning the people's heads, and making it a crime to invoke God and the saints, or at least declaring it folly and fanaticism, and a fitting subject of ridicule which might well provoke the laughter of the public. These philosophers and Freemasons, believe me, will scour Italy from end to end, for the sole purpose of tearing the ancient faith from her very heart and depriving her of her ministers and her religion; for they covet the wealth of her monasteries and the treasures given by Italian piety to the churches for the worship of the Lord. Pray fervently to the Virgin Mary that these re-

generators of the liberty of the people may not be within half a year the rulers of the Italian land. We well may fear that they will swoop down like eagles and vultures upon your sanctuary, upon the treasures of the Madonna, and with sacrilegious hands strip her of the collar of pearls which adorns her neck, the pendants of diamonds in her ears, and the crown of emeralds and rubies that she wears upon her head."

The poor priest was much distressed at this fearful picture ; but Antonio asked :

"And, signora, what became of the Vicomte Chlodoald ?"

"He was living upon his domains," replied the marchioness, "when one evening, at nightfall, a peasant appeared before the portico of his beautiful house of Luynes, situated on the banks of the Loire. This man asked to see the vicomte, and spoke to him for some time. After having had supper served for him, the vicomte assigned him a room on the ground floor of the house, and the peasant retired early to rest. About midnight the gallop of a horse was heard, and next morning the stranger had disappeared. On the following day, the steward of the household was at a cattle sale in the neighboring village of Langet, and as he was about turning from the spot, where he had just purchased a fine yoke of oxen, a man in the uniform of a Garde Nationale spoke in his ear :

" 'Bravo, Thomas ! you make a very good smuggler.'"

" 'What do you mean, Saucisse ? I do not un-

derstand you,' said the steward. "I have just bought this yoke of oxen for a shining louis d'or, and from Barthelemy, who certainly has no trade with smugglers.'

"'Play off innocent as long as you can, Thomas; but we know what we know. We can tell who came to the vicomte's villa last night, and was so well treated; and who departed in company with Renault, upon a horse which you saddled and bridled yourself, and with letters of recommendation from your hangman of a master.'

"And Saucisse, with a significant nod of the head, shrugged his shoulders, and went his way.

"This Saucisse was one of the fiercest Jacobins of the Revolution. He was as bloodthirsty as a hyena. He it was who, at the taking of the Bastille, slew Delaunay, the commander, and the generous young officer, the Marquis de Pelleport, as he was bravely defending his superior, Losney Sabrey, making a rampart for him of his own body. This same wretch plunged his dagger into the Marquis d'Escars and the unfortunate Laporte. It was also he who massacred the Benedictines of Redon, set fire to their abbey, and burned it to the ground. This monster's usual custom was to open the side of his victim and pluck out the heart, have it roasted in the public square, bite it, and throw it to the dogs. Marat and Pethion had among all their crew no fiercer nor more brutal ruffian than he.

"The steward, confiding the oxen to the care of a peasant boy, sprang on his horse, and did not

slacken his speed till he reached the vicomte. The latter, without being in the least disturbed, wrote a note, which he sent by his game-keeper to the curé of Montbazon. The stranger who, the evening before, under the disguise of a peasant, had sought shelter at the villa, was an archbishop fleeing from the Jacobins, who pursued him with unrelenting hate, and sought to kill him, that they might drag his corpse at their horses' tails. He was a great friend of Chlodoald, and had every confidence that, by finding him, he would be sheltered from the enemy. Notwithstanding the vigilance of Saucisse, the archbishop reached Anjou with letters of recommendation, and thus escaped for the present from the hands of the Jacobins. But they determined to have their revenge.

“One night, about ten o'clock, when everything was still, peace and quiet reigned in the villa of Luynes, and the family of the vicomte had just finished supper, there came a knock all of a sudden at the principal door of the castle. The porter went out and called :

“ ‘Who is there ?’ ”

“ He was answered :

“ ‘A messenger from the curé of Augerde with letters for his excellency.’ ”

“The porter opened the little grated door that the messenger might enter. Scarcely had he done so than the latter threw himself upon him and stopped his mouth with a handful of tow. Two men rushed in, struck him with their knives, and



stretched him dead. Then seven others sprang from behind the hedge, with the air of people familiar with the place, passed softly through one of the windows of the orangery, and took their places in the house.

“The vicomte, his wife, his eldest son Gilbert, and the beautiful Hermeline, who was then about sixteen years old, were still seated at table, after supper, taking a cup of tea and chatting pleasantly, while Beatrice, whom you see here, had risen to bring the sugar-tongs from the side-board. The door was thrown violently open, the ruffians rushed in yelling and cursing :

“ ‘Dogs of aristocrats ! prepare for death.’

“A cry of terror broke from the ladies’ lips ; but these revolting brutes seized them by the hair, and in an instant they and the father and brother had their eyes plucked out. The ruffians then threw the bloody eyes into the sugar-bowl, saying, with a horrid laugh :

“ ‘There is aristocratic sugar for the coffee.’

“Then they killed them, and having torn out their hearts, threw them into the soup-tureen, saying :

“ ‘There is soup *à la Vicomte.*’

“Then cutting off their heads, they arranged them carefully on four dishes, at the four corners of the table, saying :

“ ‘These are *Paté de Versailles, aux pistaches et aux amandes.*’\*

\* Pastry of Versailles, with pistache and amandes.

“Having finished their horrible butchery, they laid hands upon the silver covers, the gold chandeliers, and took with them anything valuable that they found upon the table or sideboard. Then they placed the four mutilated aristocrats on their chairs around the table, saying, with a fiendish laugh :

“ ‘ So should all aristocrats be made to sup.’ ”

“With one fierce glance around the room they rushed out, and, bloody and dripping with gore, returned by the same way they had come to the village of Langet.

“When these monsters entered the room, poor little Beatrice had hidden herself, benumbed with terror, behind the window-curtain, and her good angel had assisted her so that, though overcome by terror and perfectly unconscious, she had remained standing, and thus escaped the ruffians’ notice, almost by a miracle.

“When the people of the vicomte’s household had finished their supper in the servant’s hall, the steward and the butler came up to clear the table, while the valet de chambre also advanced from another direction to conduct the vicomte, as usual, to his apartments. But, O my God ! what were their feelings on entering that chamber of horrors ?

“The severed heads were the first objects which presented themselves to their eyes. The sight of the headless trunks, streaming with blood from their various wounds, filled the faithful servants with horror and affright. Motionless with terror,

their hair standing up upon their heads, they stood like statues. The hapless child then came out of her hiding place; but, seeing the mutilated remains, she took one step backward, and fell senseless to the floor.

“It is useless, my friends,” continued the lady, “for me to give any further details of this melancholy story. Since that terrible time, my unfortunate Cousin Beatrice was seized at intervals with epileptic fits, during which she seems as if dead. The best physicians of the University of Bologna have treated her for them, but so far without result. Hence we asked our countryman, the Abbé Jourdan, if after Mass he would touch Beatrice with oil from the lamp that burns before the miraculous statue of Mary, for our only hope is in her intercession.”

Old Umiltá, the rector’s servant, who chanced to be present and heard the last words of the Marchioness Lavinie, wiped away the great tears that rolled down her cheeks, and said :

“Oh ! as for the oil from the statue of the Madonna, good signora,” said she eagerly, “I think it would be a sin to doubt its miraculous effect. Ask our good father-rector. He will tell you how many blind and deaf and lame, and people with every kind of diseases, are cured out and out by the blessed oil.”

“Umiltá is right, old dotard as she is,” said the rector smilingly.

“Old, do you say ? Well, tell me, young sir, what has old or young to do with it ? The truth,

as the old rector (rest his soul !) used to say to me—he was a fine man, and one of good sense; oh! ho! when I think of him my heart bleeds—well, as the old rector used to say to me—let me see how long ago that was: almost forty years yesterday. Bless me, how the years fly for all of us! What was I saying? What a poor head I have. Oh! yes; the rector, good soul! told me that the truth is . . . the truth is one.”

“Bravo! Well done, Umiltâ,” cried young Pizzini and Taddei, both together.

“You may well say so,” replied the old servant. “You see, father-rector, that these young lords have some brains to spare.”

And the good old servant rubbed her hands gleefully, and glanced mischievously at the young men, as much as to say: “I settled the rector.”

But she added, aloud:

“That blessed oil, you think, cures only Christians. That’s all you know about it. But the mountain shepherds and hunters come and get the oil, and rub it on the doors of their sheepfolds, to protect them from wolves or from all kinds of diseases.”

“That is true,” said the rector. “God and his holy Mother reward the faith of these mountaineers, by permitting that the oil should preserve them and their beasts.”

“To be sure it is true. Umiltâ is not one of those babblers who, at every wag of the tongue, make some blunder. The oil of the Madonna cures men and beasts, but it also has power over incan-

tations, charms, and magic, and, saving your presence, over the devil, from whom God deliver us! You know that, before the holy Council of Trent came, these valleys and rocks were frequented by evil spirits. No one could venture to come up these mountain sides during the equinoxes, or during the waning moon, whether to cut wood, to mind their flocks, or to hunt, because day and night they were haunted by ghosts and phantoms, who filled the air with unearthly yells, dragged their clanking chains, set off cannons, and brought wind and storm and tempest. Close by here they made such fearsome noises that one would think the end of the world had come. Oh! how it frightened us, but the Council of Trent came with his scourge, and beat the devil and broke his horns; for the Council of Trent was as brave as a lion. He struck right and left with his big stick, and left the evil spirits in no humor of laughing."

"But I beg of you do not repeat such stuff," said the rector, annoyed, because he saw that every one was doing their best to refrain from laughing.

"I can tell you, father-rector," said Umiltá angrily, "that you will have to study a good while before you will be fit to tie the shoestrings of Father Rocco, the old rector; to tell me who the Council of Trent was, I that heard it all from Bernardo. Bernardo was the old sacristan. He told me more than thirty times. He says to me, says he, 'The Council of Trent made his studies with Father Rocco, in the seminary of San Vigilio, and was always the first of the school and had his



theology at his fingers' ends, as if it was the Our Father. He became so wise that he was the admiration of the whole world, and no one could dispute with him, do you see.' And Bernardo said to me too, says he, 'There was Luther, a frockless monk, who thought he was very wise and learned, and he could not hold up his head before the Council of Trent, and was soon shown to be a dunce and a blockhead.' Well, to make a long story short, many a time I saw, here at this very table, the deans of Ossenigo, Volargno, San Piero, Gargagnago, and San Ambrogio, who, after dinner, questioned and disputed together about theology, and wanted to carry it over Father Rocco. But he brought down his fist on the table, and he said :

"'Um ltá, bring me from the third shelf in the library, number 10, "The Council of Trent," bound in calfskin, and with a red ticket.'

"I brought it to him. He put his spectacles on his nose, wet his finger, and turned over page after page, till he cried out gleefully :

"'Here it is! Section fifth, canon fourth. Listen. The "Council of Trent" says so straight and clear, and what can you answer to that?'

"And the deans hadn't a word, but sat there with a bee in their bonnet."

"Good ; go on Umiltá," said Almavilla. "Let us hear what the Council of Trent has to do with your ghosts?"

"You should have heard some of the old people who told the whole story to Bernardo the sacristan. The Council of Trent came up here with

his canons, and made such a hubbub that if all hell were among the rocks it would take to its heels. It must have been a fine sight to see all these devils, who could not resist his conjurations. Some of them changed to rain, others to streams; others flew away up on the highest peaks, or became statues of ice and melted into water, or turned into fire and burned the brushwood, rising in smoke into the air; some changed themselves to eagles, pheasants, hawks, owls, and flew off with horrible screams; then some of them became wolves, bears, foxes, or squirrels, and disappeared among the rocks with stunning noise, enough to kill one."

"And the oil of the lamp?" said Taddei; "what had it to do with it?"

"Oh! oh! Holy Virgin! but you are impatient. But I forgive you, young signor; you are a stranger, and do not know the valley of the Corona; that is why you are so anxious to hear. Know, then, gentlemen, that after our valleys were freed from these delevtries which used to frighten travellers so much, pilgrims came more than ever to the shrine. But just see the malice of the devil! In the battle with the Council of Trent, as the devil took flight he broke an egg in the middle of those rocks that you see from the window. When he cracked the shell he vanished, and—Christ save us!" (here the good woman crossed herself), "out came a white ghost. First it was very small, and kept leaping around from rock to rock just like a little bird, as white as a swan; then it grew and

grew in a reasonable way, just like you and I, neither more nor less; but all on a sudden it became a giant, that with a single step could reach from one side of the mountain to the other. Fancy how frigh'ened the people were. There it stood, big, big, white, white, at the head of the bridge, and played all kinds of tricks on the pilgrims; and tales were told of it that would make Scanderbeg himself tremble, if he is the knight without fear.\*

“But Father Rocco said never a word, but thought and thought. At last, one night he woke up Bernardo, went to the altar and filled a little bottle with oil from the lamp, saying:

“‘Bernardo, now have courage; we will go to the bridge.’

“‘Father-rector,’ replied Bernardo, ‘the white ghost will take us by the shoulders and give us into the clutches of the devil.’

“‘We will go, I tell you; and be quick.’

“So Bernardo went. Those were the men! When Father Rocco had reached the middle of the bridge he made the conjuration in surplice and stole, and rubbed the angles of the parapet with holy oil. Terrible to say, as he gave the last rub, a horrible noise was heard from the depths of the abyss, a great smoke arose, the mountains trembled, and the white ghost . . . was never seen again.”

\*In these regions the name for Scanderbeg, or Giorgio Castriotto, the Albanian hero who, in 1442, opposed the Mussulman invasion and the strategies of the Turks, and whose courage passed into a proverb.

The company, after having enjoyed the good woman's tales, arose from the table, and, having thanked the rector, began to descend the immense stairway of the mountain.

Having reached the bridge, Almavilla, who had not forgotten Signor Poli's rebuke, said to him, smiling :

"Now you see, Signor Poli, that superstition really reigns supreme in these poor minds. Look down these abysses, and see if you do not chance to perceive the white ghost."

"Umiltá," replied Signor Poli, "is really a worthy professor of that science. But, according to you, signor, the most enlightened Christians are to be compared to poor old doards like her. But you must admit that if you judge these things, which are so noble and sublime, from the same point of view as the ignorant and illiterate, there is nothing that, considered in the same way, will not appear mean and paltry. Do you think that your Voltaire, D'Alembert, Rousseau, Diderot, and all those worthy and much-vaunted philosophers have not their own superstitions, weaknesses, and fooleries? And even you yourself, signor, cannot flatter yourself that you are free from them. Believe me, you have some, and even a great many of them."

"But still I have not had the Council of Trent for a fellow-student."

"True; but I can tell you that the old servant, with all her childish folly, has the better of you in her judgment of the council. Did you not observe how much the old woman venerated the personifi-

cation of the holy congress of the universal Church, whilst you despise it and affect not to believe in it—pardon me for saying so—in order to pass yourself off as a philosopher? You also know that the people of the Tyrol believed that, after the Council of Trent, all the magicians, sorcerers, and enchanters disappeared; and this, as you are aware, was also a matter of faith in every part of Italy, as well as in France and throughout Germany. And so true is this that the Tyrolese are now almost the only ones who no longer believe in such absurdities, while the Parisian populace believe them as firmly as they did three hundred years ago. If you grant that the Tyrol is so pious, and so slightly tainted with superstition, it is due to the Council of Trent. Go to France, Scotland, England, Protestant Germany, Sweden, or Russia, and then tell me if in those countries, among the lower classes, and even among educated people, there is not a deluge of superstition never to be found in the Tyrol or in the upper or central parts of Italy. As for the oil of the Madonna, you must have observed that these illustrious French *émigrés* thought precisely as did Umiltá, and as do all who have confidence in the almighty power of God. But that is enough of the subject, signor.”

The subject was changed, and, conversing on various lighter topics, the party reached the villa of Peri.





## CHAPTER XV.

### THE CIMBRI OF THE VALLEY OF FOLGHERIA.

ROVEREDO is a beautiful and populous city, situated at the entrance to the Italian Tyrol, being a key, fortification, and outpost to the valleys lying in front of it; for its position was favorable for their defence, besides the fact of its containing a strong and massive castle, which in the wars of Louis XV., and those of the League of Cambray against the Venetians, sustained more than one fierce and prolonged siege, besides daring sorties and bloody conflicts, which revived the hopes as it improved the condition of the Emperor Maximilian.

This city has many beautiful streets, bordered by numerous and elegant edifices in a style of architecture which combines something of both the Teutonic and the Italian, with its heavy projectures, great eaves formed of winged dragons, eagles, griffins, or other huge monsters, who, during heavy rains, catch the water in their open jaws or beak, and send it in streams down upon the pavement beneath.

This city is also distinguished for its commerce in silk and velvet, and its merchants trade with

Vienna, Augsburg, Salisburg, and all the vast country of the Adige, Aizach, Talfer, and Rienzo. The river Lenno, which usually flows into it about midday, renders it cheerful and smiling in all that portion which is reflected in its blue waters, and enriches it by great manufactories wherein are made the choicest fabrics for the whole of Italy.

The Lenno in its course forms the most beautiful cascades as it rushes down from the mountain heights, and flows clear and limpid, filling the canals of the town and turning the wheels of the looms. The river, by means of the most ingenious contrivances, is the sole and most potent motor of all these immense machines. The manufactories which stand upon the bank are large, square buildings, six or seven stories high, and interspersed on their four sides with long windows, beside which are to be seen the girls who guide, direct, wind, and unwind the skeins which turn on the immense wheels.

It is really a fine sight to see the great and majestic machines which keep in motion such multitudes of wheels and looms, and all the varieties of works that twist, wind, and turn the skeins of silk set upon the wheels, and thus prepared for the fabrication of silk and velvet. Even if Roveredo had no other attraction, for this alone it would deserve to be numbered among the most interesting as well as the most productive portions of the Tyrol which travellers usually visit; but Roveredo has also the most beautiful gardens, vineyards, green and smiling meadows, and country-houses surrounded by

orchards and gardens, so charming that the eye is constantly pleased and surprised. Its inhabitants are both remarkably hospitable and most affable in manner. They are, as a general thing, cheerful and intelligent; but this is, however, the general character of the people of the Tyrol. Roveredo, especially, has produced men famous in science or in letters, and in this respect, perhaps, surpasses any of the other cities of the whole country.

At the period of which we speak lived Clementino Vannetti, whose name became best known throughout Italy by his "*Osservazione sopra Orazio*,"\* and by his profound study of the Italian classics, to which his attention had been directed by Father Antonio Cesari and by Pederzani. The Count d'Almavilla was not, candidly speaking, a great lover of that beautiful literature; but he was one of those men who affect the society of the learned, and consequently consider themselves wise, just as certain persons believe themselves erudite because they have collected in their libraries a number of fine books in costly and elegant bindings. Having heard Vannetti much applauded for his work on Cagliostro, the count, as well as his daughter, desired to pay him a visit, and at his request was accompanied by Father Antonio Soini, the pastor of Ala, who was also a literary man, and one acquainted with all the graces and beauties of the Italian language.

\* "*Observations or Comments on Horace.*"

But the count's disappointment, at his first introduction to the poet, was positively laughable. He imagined that all celebrated men should be tall, with a grave, stern countenance, a manner at once haughty and condescending, a sonorous and musical voice, a brilliant complexion, prominent temples, and a forehead massive enough to contain an immense quantity of brains. Under this delusion, the count had prepared and elaborated complimentary speeches, in the latest Parisian fashion, full of the commonplace and absurd flattery that brainless writers fling so complacently at the head of literary men. At sight of Vannetti the count came down from the clouds, finding himself in the presence of a little man, very thin, very plain in appearance, with an air half dreamy, half timid, dressed carelessly and negligently, and who, having invited him to be seated on a hard sofa, in the midst of a mountain of books, spoke to him of the Abbot of Caluso, of the Count di Breme, of Alfieri, and of Lagrange, of whom the Count d'Almavilla, knowing little, was at a loss what to say.

Then Vannetti, turning to Father Soini, said to him :

“ What has become of you for some time past, Don Antonio ? It is a really lucky day when you do show yourself, for it happens but seldom. And yet Ala is not a thousand miles from here. In September I expect to have our Cesari at my Grazie villa, and we shall have a delightful party. You know I shall expect you without fail. If you could see how I have ornamented my little chapel ;

it is a perfect gem. I have a number of relics from Rome, and two pairs of gold chandeliers that are most beautiful. Of course I am my own sacristan. When Father Cesari sees it, he will rub his hands and nod his head, and putting his finger to his ear, in his usual way, cry :

“ ‘ O the beautiful grape ! ’ ” \*

The Count d'Almavilla was perfectly astounded at such almost childish simplicity, and could scarcely believe that this was really a literary man, and one whom the real merit of his works had made so famous, and yet he felt that he could readily have mistaken him for a church beadle or the porter of a convent.

After the interchange of a few compliments he took leave, after which he freely expressed his surprise to Father Soini, who answered :

“ Men of talent are not to be measured by the span, my dear count. This Vannetti, who is fully conversant with the lore of ancient and modern nations, is most assuredly very unlike the philosophers whom you knew in Paris—boastful, vain, and impious men, without religion of any sort ; for he combines with his solid learning an amiable modesty and ingenuousness which is the mark of pure and fervent souls. Such as you see him, rudely and somewhat coarsely fashioned, he is admired and applauded by the first literary men of

\* An exclamation of Father Cesari whenever he was pleased or surprised. As for Vannetti, he was a man of remarkable simplicity and kindness of character. He loved nothing but his books, his little chapel, and the very limited number of his intimate friends.



the day, who consider a correspondence with him as a special honor, and set the greatest store upon his autograph. And notwithstanding his interest in, and devotion to, the study of the writings of the Latins, and those in our own beautiful tongue, he always takes the greatest delight in arranging and ornamenting with his own hands the charming little altar of his private chapel, and placing every day before his beautiful Madonna, with all the ardor of a lover, the fairest and most fragrant flowers from his garden. Oh! might it please God, my dear count, that all our learned men were gifted with this lofty genius, united to such fervent piety and to a straightforward, simple, and pleasing address. But this happy combination is daily becoming more and more rare, and the least of our distinguished men glorify themselves and assume airs which would be unbecoming in Plato himself. At Verona I knew Girolamo Pompei, the celebrated Hellenist, who has given us a translation of the 'Lives of Plutarch,' and he was a second edition of Vannetti. And the brothers Ballerini, who won the admiration of all Italy by their scholarly attainments and great learning, might easily be mistaken for a couple of hedge-priests. Often when the most distinguished scientific or literary men of Germany, France, and England came to visit them, they have met them returning from fishing, wrapped in coarse woollen cloaks, carrying on their arms the fish which they had caught, and some herbs, that with it constituted their repast."

The Count d'Almavilla was not so constituted as to appreciate the mild and modest lustre of such men ; hence Father Soini spoke to deaf ears. Still, he always affected admiration for celebrated men, principally that he might boast of their friendship, which shed round him something of the good odor of knowledge ; therefore, no sooner did he hear of anything rare or extraordinary than he gave himself no rest till he had gratified his eager curiosity to see it. One day he chanced to be at dinner with a member of the Cosmi family, and several friends and relatives of the host had been invited to do honor to the count. At dessert, when conversation flows most freely, the count put questions to one and another as to the most celebrated parts of the valleys of the Tyrol. One named the Val di Nonè as being the richest in ancient feudal castles and in the fertility of the soil ; one the Val di Ledro, for its abundance of fragrant hay ; one the Val Gardena, with its fat pasture-lands and herds of fine cows, from whose milk were made the best and most delicate butter and cheese that Italy could produce ; one lauded the Val di Fiemè, covered with vast and sombre forests of larches and firs, which are hewn down and taken on rafts along the Adige to Verona, and, thence descending the river to the Adriatic Sea, stock the Venetian warehouses ; one loudly extolled the Valley of Giudicarie ; another the Val d'Arco ; another that of Tione ; another Valsugana, and so on, each painting in the most beautiful colors the hills, the fruits, the grain, the grapes, the streams, the

rivers of his favorite spot, to the great amusement of the count, Lauretta, and Lida. A cousin of the learned Tartarotti emphatically declared his opinion in the following terms: "For my part, I consider it an indisputable fact that the most extraordinary valleys of the Tyrol are those of Folgheria and Vallarsa."

"What do you find so wonderful in them?" replied Birti. "Granted they are cheerful, well stocked with cattle, having an abundance of fine trees, good pastures, enormous chestnut groves, well-cultivated fields, immense forests, and so on; but do they surpass in any of these respects those mentioned by Count Alberti, Taxis, or Zolestein?"

"Unquestionably not; but they offer to the learned an occasion for profound study in the strange races who have peopled it at various periods."

"If you mean by strange," said Count Fedrigotti, "the bravest, most powerful race of men that ever delighted human eyes, you have spoken truly. The Folgarites are of lofty stature, strong, muscular, and compact limbs, and of such form that they might serve as models for the Jupiter of Phidias or the Mars of Polycletus; the women are all Junos or Penthesileas, they have as charming complexions as it is possible to see anywhere; and, besides all this, these people are good, loyal, brave, and of incorruptible and unwavering fidelity."

"Yes," replied the other, "they deserve all you have said of them; but when I called them strange I might have said strangers, for they are not indi-

genous to the soil, nor are they of Italian blood ; they preserve their ancient customs and their ancient language without change or adulteration, and this is in itself a most astonishing fact. They are the last remnants of the ancient Cimbri, who came down from their Northland upon Gaul, Spain, and Italy, and were constantly combated by the Roman legions, till at length they were met in the great plain in front of Verona by Catullus and Marius, who completely routed them, and left the greater part of their number dead upon the field. The few who escaped took refuge in the mountains between Verona, Vicenza, and the Tyrol, and settled there with their women and children, and thus became the dwellers of these wooded regions. It is easy to imagine that such a people kept themselves sequestered from the inhabitants of the country, and, in their turn, drove them out or slew them, and in this way made themselves masters of the lands and of the castles, so that from them sprang a people frank and free, and totally distinct from the neighboring mountaineers. Thus have these people dwelt for twenty centuries in our midst, speaking their ancient language amongst themselves, but making use of ours at the fairs and market-places. And their children, because of their honesty, faithfulness, and industry, are chosen as servants in the households of all the Tyrolese nobility, and especially as cooks ; for they are scrupulously clean and prepossessing in appearance, and have learned from their mothers the art of making butter, cream, pastry, and various other

delicacies, and of giving a certain flavor to every dish."

"And what language do they speak?" asked d'Almavilla in surprise.

"They speak the Cimbric, which is one of the primitive Indo-Germanic languages. Some similarity in their idiom has caused them to be falsely supposed, by some learned men, to be a branch of the Goths or Bavarians, who had taken refuge in our mountains; but they were soon convinced of their error, for the people speak the ancient Teutonic tongue. In 1708 Frederick IV., King of Denmark, who was led by curiosity to visit them, was astonished to hear the language of the German Ocean, of ancient Dacia, and particularly the purest and most elegant Saxon phraseology."

"What part of the country do they inhabit?" asked the count.

"They inhabit, with us, the vales of Vallarsa and Folgneria, besides a tract of land extending further back; but at Verona and Vicenza they dwell in what are called the Seven Circles, and are often mentioned by historians as the men of the Seven Circles."

"Papa," cried Lauretta, "I must go there at any cost. No! no! no excuses. I want to go there, and go I must."

The guests were all astonished at what seemed to them such forwardness on the part of a young girl towards her father, and looked on in silence while they inwardly condemned her; for these poor people did not understand the sublimity of



the Voltairean education--they who still preserved in their homes the wise severity by which the authority of the head of the house is maintained, and therefore commanded not only love, but respect and obedience. We know not whether the Italian Tyrol still retains the customs of fifty years ago; but we can affirm that at that period young people loved and respected their elders, for they were gentle and well-bred, and every young man who is gentle and well-bred is never guilty of a want of respect towards his parents, towards priests, or towards ladies. In this way we were brought up to the age of sixteen. Of this we can give proofs, without which it would be incredible, such a deplorable change has the Revolution effected.

Before setting out for Folgheria, Count d'Almavilla expressed a desire to visit the house in which Cagliostro had lived, and to see the apartments in which he had cured people who came thither from all the valleys of the Tyrol, and particularly the little recess in which he had initiated into Egyptian Masonry numbers of lords and nobles from Germany, Italy, and many of the Swiss cantons. At Roveredo there was a sort of guide, who led strangers to Cagliostro's dwelling, and there poured out the greatest and most astonishing pieces of absurdity that ever entered the brain of an idiot.

"Here it was," said this babbling, "that Cagliostro kept concealed the *magic bottle* in which, by the aid of spirits, he saw things which were distant or future events; and here, they say, are heard after

dark all sorts of wonderful sounds, especially on the Sunday nights" (that is to say, when the worthy guide had taken more wine than usual). "Here," he continued, "used to be made the trial of the pistol. Well-a-day, my lords and ladies, they had queer doings."

"What! what!" cried Lauretta eagerly. "What did Cagliostro do with the pistol?"

"O my lady! it was not he at all," replied the guide, "but the gentlemen of the Egyptian Masonry, who put to the novice's forehead a pistol that had in it two balls, which the Grand Copt put there before their eyes. But do not be frightened, my lady, for they put a bandage over the man's eyes, and gave him an empty pistol. The blind man then cocked it, drew the trigger, and crack went the pistol; for, at the same time, the man who stood by set off the loaded one in his ear, and the blind man thought he was shot in the head, and some of them fell to the ground, for they thought they were killed, sure and certain. When they got up and found no harm done to them, of course they were told that it was by the power of the Grand Copt, who had the elixir of immortal life.\*

"Here, my lords and ladies, they had the trial of the 'Arch of Steel'; and that was that when he who was to be initiated advanced, twelve of these gentry drew out their swords and crossed them in the air so as to form an arch, under which the novice had to pass without trembling. And now, I ask

\* In the Roman trial it came out that Cagliostro made those to be initiated submit to these trials.

you, what monks, even the Capuchins, have to pass through such trials? And now we have come to the little door that Cagliostro called *Berliche*. If you want to see it, I will raise the curtain and turn the handle with my glove, because one has to have a care how he touches it, for fear of being burned, since the devil laid his claw upon it."

"Indeed!" said Lida. "So the devil appeared at some of their meetings."

"To be sure he did. Just fancy! he came up that little staircase that leads down into the cellar, and he first pointed his horns like a snail; then he drew them in and out as one would a telescope; then, putting his cloven foot behind him and his tail between his legs, he sent in several yards of it through the door, shaking it and cracking it like a whip from one side to the other; then he leaped into the middle of the room, making horrible grimaces, and roaring and howling at the poor man who was becoming a Mason. Think how the poor wretch's heart must have beat. And all this they did to try the courage and the valor of the novice. But that is nothing to what Lucifer did for Cagliostro; for you must know he could serve a good turn as well as a bad one. In the first place, he gave him money; he brought him bags of gold and silver that came from the Pyramids; and from the mummies in the tombs of Babel he took the large diamonds that Cagliostro wore on his fingers, in his buttons, and even in his shoe buckles. Lucifer was his apothecary, and distilled for him the water of life, to make people grow young. That is as true

as gospel. Cagliostro said—I heard him many a time, heard him with my own ears—that by the power of that water he had been alive more than a thousand years, and knew the Magi from the East. Then Lucifer gave him the filtered water of immortality; whosoever takes six drops of it on sugar will never die. The good man sold it dear, and got many a piece of gold for it. I tried one day to steal a little bottle of it from him, but I could not succeed. If I had, I would never die.

“To be short, Lucifer served Cagliostro sometimes as lackey, sometimes as groom, and sometimes as steward. Oftentimes when Cagliostro went driving through Roveredo he was drawn by eight horses, and these fiery black steeds were no other than eight devils, and Lucifer himself was coachman, wearing a livery all embroidered with gold braid, and white plumes on his head, with pearl buttons and buckskin gloves. Oh! when I recall it. Every time that these eight black horses passed before a church or a cross they hinnied and neighed, and kicked like mad, and Lucifer beat them with all his might; and I can tell you that at this *asperges* the ugly devils scarcely touched the ground.”\*

“Did you really see them?” asked Lauretta, shuddering with fear.

“Did I see them, did you say? I was the son of the porter, whose soul may Heaven rest! He did not fear the devil, and often talked with Berlic.

\* All these absurdities were for some time current among the common people of Roveredo.

He knew all Cagliostro's secrets, and many a time told me of him ; how Cagliostro was really a devil, though the world took him for a saint, but not my mother. When papa brought us in the remnants of the dinner, scarcely had he turned his back than mamma used to throw them out, saying: ' Children, do not touch that stuff ; it was cooked at the fire of hell, and the devil himself was the cook ! ' She never allowed us to go into the stables, because she feared the demon horses ; and when she heard them neigh or hinnie she always crossed herself.

" In fact, there were devils everywhere. There are a few in the house still, for I get their work in all parts of it. Sometimes I find two bricks out of their place, and I scarcely have them put back than they move others. In the little room of the magic bottle there are heard, as I have told you, voices and all manner of queer noises ; and oftentimes out comes a mouse from some crevice, or a bat flies round and round. On the little stairway there is always a cat who mews pitifully, and a dog who barks in the cellar. The glasses shake, chairs dance, beds creak, the doors open, and the windows close. Sometimes there's a regular uproar, especially during the March moon."

Lauretta began to tremble ; she looked around her, and almost imagined that the floors were dancing under her feet. The count, too, seemed rather ill at ease. The count, who mocked at pious beliefs and at faith in the oil of the Madonna, was, like all irreligious men, remarkably superstitious.



About two days after their visit to Cagliostro's house they set out for the country of the Cimbri, accompanied by the Baron Malfatti, Count Fedrigotti, and Signor Cosmi. They travelled for several hours in the count's landau, which was an extremely commodious vehicle much used at that time; but having reached the foot of the mountain, they continued their way on horseback. The country of Folgheria is thickly interspersed with groves and wooded knolls covered with the finest trees and shrubs of all descriptions. In this respect it surpasses any other portion of the Alps. The meadows are of soft and fragrant grass; hence the milk in this region is sweet and aromatic, and is afterwards made into butter and cheese so delicious that they command a price one-third higher than any produced in the other districts. These valleys abound in rich fields of barley, rye, corn, and maize. Both valleys and plains are watered most abundantly, while the streams thus serve a double purpose in affording refreshment for the cattle. There is no finer sight than the cabins of the shepherds, situated on little hillocks, surrounded by many-branched lindens, oaks, and beech-trees, particularly those which stand upon the cheerful slopes of Pedemont, Pianello, and Roccalto. The farm-yards and stables are scrupulously clean, not to speak of the interior of the houses, of which the walls are brilliant with the copal varnish. The wooden vessels are kept so clean and scoured so white by the housewives that they look like ivory. The women are always dressed with ex-

treme neatness and taste, and wear pretty head-dresses adorned with various colored ribbons.

At nightfall of the same day our travellers came to a little inn in the village of Roana, where they found numbers of people proceeding on horseback to the fair of Asiago, the principal town of the Seven Circles, and, being on the territory of Vicenza, belongs to the Republic of Venice, which permits it an independent government, according to the ancient laws of its founders, under the protection of the Venetian lords. In the inn all was in commotion. About thirty strong, robust mules were being saddled and bridled; for the country people during the full moon travel all night, in order to reach the market early in the morning. It was dark night when these hardy mountaineers set out across the valleys and mountains, on the road to Asiago, and left the inn almost empty. It was a rare thing for gentlemen to pass this way, and the hostelry was principally frequented by the mountain people on their way to Bisele, Enego, Gallio, and Stoccaredo; therefore the hostess of the Peacock was all in a flurry, having two young ladies and three lords to feed and lodge.

Lauretta, who was small, thin, and so fragile that she seemed almost transparent, looked with envy at the plump girls of the inn, who were tall, finely formed, with white and red complexions. Their manner was at once gay and modest; they came and went with remarkable lightness. They did not know a word of Italian; but Lida, who was well acquainted with German, was delighted to

hear them speak in their quaint Cimbrian tongue, and readily understood all the encomiums which these good girls, while busily making the beds, passed upon the beauty of the graceful strangers who had honored the inn by their presence; she laughed as she heard the comments of these simple country people upon the gentlefolk from the town. Lida was about to translate these agreeable things into French for Lauretta's benefit, but no sooner had she spoken the first words of French than one of the girls hastily left the room and went down to her mistress. A few moments afterwards the landlady came up to the young ladies, and said, addressing Lida:

“My lady, as you know French, would you have the goodness to speak to a stranger who is in the next room, and who knows neither German nor Italian? We are in the greatest straits about him, and we thought that perhaps you, who are so good and gentle, might be able to console him and relieve us a little. To-day he asked us for a number of things, and we could not understand a word he said.”

The two young ladies brought the landlady into the presence of the count and his companions, to whom she explained that a French gentleman, who was travelling on horseback on the road from Roana to Levico and Caldonazzo, met with an accident which had threatened to prove fatal to him.

“He had got as far as Pozza,” said the landlady, “on a young and fiery horse, and was riding

through the valley, about a quarter of a league from here. He came to a prairie where a number of young heifers were at pasture, and, as they always do, they arose and ran from side to side, throwing up their heads and lowing. The horse took fright, and, taking the bit between his teeth, started on a gallop before the gentleman could stop him. He pursued his course so furiously that, coming to a bank, horse and rider went over into the stream. The water was fortunately so deep that when he was thrown from the saddle it broke the fall, and prevented him from being dashed to pieces on the shore ; but one shoulder, however, struck against the rock and was dislocated, besides which he got several bruises. Some shepherds ran to help him, drew him out of the water, placed him on a litter of straw, and brought him here. We brought the village surgeon, who soon set his shoulder ; but his arm is still very much swollen, and he has to keep his bed. The poor gentleman suffers a great deal, I can tell you, and asks a great many things which we do not understand. Will you be so good, my lords, as to speak to him ?—for we are ready to give him everything he wants.”

They all proceeded to the sick man's apartment, and as they approached his bed, and were presented to him, saw a man a trifle bald, who seemed to be suffering considerably. As soon as d'Almavilla addressed him in French, he raised his head with an evident pleasure which can only be understood by those who have found themselves in a country of whose language they were ignorant, and

who suddenly hear themselves addressed in their native tongue.

Scarcely had d'Almavilla set eyes upon him than he exclaimed: "Why! Monsieur d'Herbeville, is this really you?"

So saying, he advanced, embraced him, and wrung his hand with deep emotion. Then turning to the others, he explained:

"Do you know that this gentleman was one of my greatest friends while I was Secretary of Legation in Paris? He was one of the richest bankers in Paris, and my father recommended me to him, through the old Marquis d'Ormea, more as a friend than as a client. O Monsieur d'Herbeville! do you remember the delightful days I spent with your family at your charming villa at Blois? Those fine carnival suppers, those magnificent entertainments which you used to give to the English, Flemish, or Polish lords, clients of your banking-house! And, I assure you, I have never forgotten the good taste and elegance, as well as the charming courtesy, which added so much to your entertainments. Where is your wife, and Childeric, your eldest son, and pretty Emma, and that lively little Nicole, who was then a mere child? How charming they must be now! My friend, this is my daughter Loretta; this other young lady is one of her most intimate friends; and these gentlemen are Tyrolese lords who have been so good as to serve me as guides in what I must call one of the most fortunate journeys of my life, since I have thus met you."



As the count recalled these pleasant incidents, and asked so many eager questions, Monsieur d'Herbeville's smiling face grew pale and sad, while large tears stood in his eyes. All the company remained silent and confused. Lauretta and Lida were touched and surprised by this sudden change of countenance, of which they could not divine the cause. A constrained silence followed, and no one seemed disposed to break it. Monsieur d'Herbeville, observing the painful pause, and understanding the reason of it, said, turning to the count :

“ My dear Edward, my good friend, you must pardon me for having allowed my grief to hinder me from showing how grateful I am for your flattering remembrance and kind enquiries ; but I have no wife, no children ! . . . God gave them to me. They were my sole happiness, but he has taken them away, and, in spite of my inconsolable grief at their loss, may he be ever blessed ! I bow beneath his almighty hand. I was living in Paris, rich, respected by the great, and loved by my friends. I had numbers of clients in the principal banking-houses of Europe. The Revolution came. I dared not risk my funds, so I placed the greater part of them in property, which I purchased in Normandy and Alsace. The Revolution made rapid strides. Anarchy and disorder prevailed at Paris. I had to keep myself concealed to escape the notice of the Jacobins. The wretches, not content with having dragged the king from Varennes to Paris, after having loaded him with insults, and

confined him with his family in the prison of the Temple, capped the climax of their audacity by bringing him as a criminal before the bar of the ferocious National Assembly.

“On that day Paris was filled with the deepest mourning. Every heart was oppressed, and full of unspeakable horror which made these blood-thirsty monsters tremble in their lair; for their cowardly hearts had been hitherto emboldened by the timidity of good Frenchmen. Snares were everywhere laid to entrap honest men, for they feared them and wished to discover their real sentiments. One of these vipers, bought and paid for by these ruffians, was unhappily in our midst. He was an under clerk in my banking-house; he came to see me on that evening, as he always did, to keep me, as he said, posted concerning the current events of the day. He pretended great indignation against the Convention, that had dared to subject their king to a sacrilegious trial. Deceived by the man's apparent sincerity, I cried out with unrestrained freedom:

“‘The king is innocent; these assassins are thirsting for his blood!’

“The traitor echoed my words and sympathized with my indignation. Soon after he left the house and hastened to accuse me to Robespierre, Péthion, Mannel. My house was soon surrounded by a troop of Jacobins, who, after having forced the door, rushed in blaspheming and howling like wild beasts.

“My wife, Childeric, and my two daughters

pressed close to my side, trembling like aspen leaves. At sight of the brutes Emma threw herself on my neck, and Nicole, embracing my knees, began to cry, calling out: 'O gentlemen, gentlemen! do not hurt papa.'

"Childeric covered his mother with his own body, for he saw that she was almost overcome with grief and terror. The leader of the party seized Emma, and attempted to remove her arms from my neck. She screamed aloud in her despair, and clung to me with all her strength. Then the assassin, brandishing a butcher's knife, at a single blow cut off her hand and tore her away from me. Poor Emma fell senseless upon her sister. The man then seized her by the hair, and killed her, while her blood poured out over little Nicole.

"At this fearful sight Childeric rushed upon him like a madman. But a blow from a hatchet cleft his face asunder, and almost at the same moment the point of a pike pierced his heart and stretched him dead at my feet. Nicole fainted, still clinging to my knees. The united efforts of these monsters could not succeed in distending her contracted muscles. Then the instrument of Childeric's murderer fell upon her shoulder and severed her arm; after which they split open her head with a second blow, and her brains were strewn upon the floor. My wife ran over to her daughter, and was pierced by sword and dagger strokes; and thus in a few moments I was deprived of wife and children, whose mutilated corpses were lying at my feet.

“Then they seized me, half unconscious as I was, carried me out, and, pushing me into a sedan-chair, dragged me for some time around the streets of Paris. At length we reached our destination; they brought me into a house, and put me in a dark room upon a wooden bench. Left to myself, my mind was in a perfect whirl, with grim spectres of death surrounding me, and the double torture of horror at the recollection of the fate of my dear ones, and uncertainty as to my future destiny. My heart beat violently, the blood rushed to my head, my brain whirled, my face burned, and yet a cold sweat covered all my limbs, and I shivered violently; I involuntarily clenched my fists, while I trembled in every joint.

“While in this fearful agony I heard the clock strike midnight; then the door was thrown violently open. Several strange men entered bearing torches; their faces were like those of the dead. Their leader stood before me with folded arms, his face livid and his eyes glassy, while he said :

“‘Herbeville, you must die; but as you have called the liberators of your country assassins, you shall have the brilliant death of the *lamp*, so that the world may see how the republic shines in its enemies. Your flesh shall be cut, and in each wound shall be placed a wick with oil; these shall be lighted; and thus, before this night has passed, you will make a splendid bonfire.’

“I was then seized and dragged into an adjoining room, where I was stripped naked and placed upon a table. The announcement of such a terri-

ble death froze my blood ; but the love of life, the horror of martyrdom, the intoxication of animal spirits which seemed to be concentrated around my heart, filled me with such frantic despair that I darted forward quick as thought, snatched a dagger from one of the men, and rushed in among them like a wounded lion. Three of the wretches fell dead at my feet. I still continued to deal blows on every side, and succeeded in wounding several others ; but the monsters surrounding me, I was soon seized and disarmed. My hands were bound behind my back, and I was laid upon the table. The lances, wicks, and torches were ready ; they were just about to pierce my flesh and put me to death amid cruel tortures, when, as it pleased God, a man rushed in hurriedly. Addressing the leader of the band, he said excitedly :

“ ‘ Director, hasten up-stairs ; your daughter has fallen in a dead faint, and we fear for her life.’ ”

“ The director, who loved his daughter to distraction, groaned aloud, and crying out to his followers : “ Let no one touch that man till I return ! ” rushed from the room.

“ The brutes who remained looked askance at me, grinding their teeth like dogs deprived of a bone. Picture to yourself, if you can, the thoughts and feelings that presented themselves to my mind while I lay in this fearful situation ; my face was wild and haggard, all around me was darkness, save what seemed like phosphorescent lights that gleamed and glowed as they are often seen on a



stormy sea. This suspense lasted for several hours, after which came an order that caus'd me to be brought back to the room where I had been at first. The night seem'd everlasting to me; all around me I saw phantoms covered with lighted wicks. I heard their screams; I saw their horrible grimaces; I imagin'd they were taking fire, and gradually being consumed, roasting and broiling before my eyes. Then my soul grew calmer, and I reflected upon the contradictions of the human heart—that this man, who was ferocious enough to enjoy seeing me die in the most excruciating torments, could still love, and love so tenderly that when he heard of his daughter's illness he flew to her assistance, his heart profoundly moved by the tenderness of paternal love. With these thoughts came a gleam of hope to my wearied mind. I raised my eyes to God, our good Father. I prostrated myself on the ground to adore his holy will; my burning heart rais'd itself to Mary, the sweet and powerful Mother of poor sinners, and my courage revived. But poor human nature soon regain'd the ascendancy, and I sank back into despondency, while my soul was fill'd with mortal terror.

“Tongue cannot tell the anguish which I endured during that terrible night; but at last it came to an end. By the first light of dawn I saw that I was in a small, damp room, dingy, and in great disorder. It gave out upon a little courtyard with high walls. I perceiv'd a little slit in the wall under the window, and, looking through it, I

saw a young girl advancing slowly with bowed head. As she approached the window, I saw she was weeping. At first I actual'y thought she was an angel from Paradise permitted to appear to me. I put my mouth to the slit, and called her in a quivering voice. Attracted by the sound, the young girl raised her head, and, running over to me, whispered :

“ ‘Do not despair, poor man ; there still remain in France some humane and grateful souls,’ and she instantly disappeared.

“I was so agitated that I thought I must be dreaming. Presently the door opened, and in came the director who, on the evening before, had condemned me to the dreadful torture of the *lamp*. I trembled, and my very soul was disturbed at sight of him. With a countenance somewhat milder than when I saw him last, he said in a whisper :

“ ‘Monsieur, you are free, but fly immediately ; quit this unhappy country !’

“At these words I fell upon my knees, stammering :

“ ‘To whom, then, . . . am I indebted . . . for liberty, . . . for life ?’

“ ‘To my daughter,’ replied the man. ‘Two years ago, if you remember, you saved her life in the Bois de Boulogne, defending her generously against three ruffians who attempted to tear her from her mother’s side. My Louise, learning that you were condemned to the torture of lighted wicks, was so filled with grief and despair, when she lost all hope of saving you, that she fell in a

swoon, from which we feared she would never waken. All night long she besought me to save you, and knew no rest till I had sworn to set you free, and thus acquit her debt of gratitude. You do not know, Monsieur d'Herbeville, from how awful a fate I have rescued you. Fly, fly, without delay! Take this disguise, this passport, and this money; a carriage is waiting for you.'”\*

\* “*Révélacion de M. d'Herbeville,*” published for the first time in German, at Vienna, in 1794.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### MONSIEUR DE MEARD.

THE National Convention of France was impious, cruel, and avaricious. It let loose the fury of the mob against the clergy, the nobility, and all who had acquired wealth, in order to impose what terms it pleased upon them, reduce them to such a condition that they dared not raise their heads, and thus snatch from them the reins of government, and wrest the kingdom from their hand. Still, but few of its members sanctioned the horrible atrocities by which the fierce and ungovernable populace put the victims of Republican proscription to death. The Convention, indeed, desired their death, but it demanded not that they should be mutilated, burned alive, and tortured in every conceivable fashion. We can scarcely bear to read the account of the horrible deeds committed by them, and which any people, however brutal and degraded, would blush to confess. If we have in our present work described any of these atrocities, we have done it with the intention of warning Italy of the fate which awaits her if she be not on her guard, and observe not attentively the workings of the secret societies that are plan-

ning her ruin, under the specious pretext of delivering her from the tyranny of kings, and rendering her *one and indivisible*.

When Monsieur d'Herbeville had at length come to that part of his story where he was set at liberty, his hearers again breathed freely, and felt as if relieved from an oppressive weight.

D'Herbeville then continued as follows :

“ God having saved me from the dreadful death which threatened me, I thanked him from the very depths of my heart, and, having repaired to the house of a faithful courtier, I got some letters of credit on the Venetian banks, and, s'ill disguised for fear of the Republicans, left Paris in safety.”

“ Truly,” cried d'Almavilla, “ it must have been the blessed souls of your dear ones who obtained such a favor for you from Heaven, and brought you safe and sound across the French frontiers.”

“ So fully did I realize this,” said d'Herbeville, “ that as soon as I had left France behind me I proceeded at once to Our Lady of the Lake, near Nice, there to make my thanksgiving, and have a requiem celebrated for the souls of those who had been so cruelly murdered before my eyes. That day was one of special joy to me. In the first place, Grand Mass was celebrated, after which I was invited to dine with the rector of the church, where, to my great joy and surprise, I met Monsieur de Méard, one of my dearest friends, whom you doubtless remember, having seen him frequently at my house.”

“ What ! our good De Méard, who so frankly



and sincerely reproached me for my intimacy with Volney and Condorcet? Remember him? How could I ever forget him? Do you remember our little quarrels, in which your wife used to take part, and Monsieur de Méard, striking his stick on the ground, cried out so emphatically: ‘And I tell you and assure you that these men are rebels against God and wicked unbelievers, and that, if you associate with them, you will also become an incarnate fiend.’

“And your wife, following up the attack, called them cowards and poltroons; said they were the malignant fever which had infected and corrupted the blood of France, the internal disorder that preyed upon her vitals, and the cause of the deluge of blasphemy, immorality, and iniquity which overflowed her; winding up by declaring me a deluded youth, led astray by their sophistry, and entangled in their nets; . . . but, after the little tempest was over, dear Madame Julie used to refresh me with a cup of her excellent Mocha, which was really delicious. But how came you to meet Monsieur de Méard on the borders of Provence? Perhaps he knew that you were going to the shrine of the Lake.”

“No; he had not the slightest suspicion of it. He had also gone thither to thank the Blessed Virgin for having rescued him from the jaws of the lion, from which, but for her assistance, he could never have escaped.”

“I am truly sorry to hear that our excellent friend should have fallen into the dragon’s mouth.

And by what fortunate chance did he escape therefrom? I am anxious to hear; for, notwithstanding his severe censures of my philosophical tendencies, I prized his friendship very highly, and feel a deep and sincere regard for him."

"After dinner," continued d'Herbeville, "we mounted our horses and set out towards Genoa. Having passed the rugged mountain of Torbia and crossed that of Roccabruna, we came about nightfall to Mentone, a pretty town in the principality of Monaco, which extends for some distance beside that beautiful river whose banks are bordered with orange-trees. Here we turned from the direct road, and went down to the port in search of a little bark which would take us to Porto Maurizio. Charmed by the delightful scenery, the tranquil water, the clear sky, the pretty gardens, and having admired the graceful costume of the women, with their short calico skirts and the jaunty straw hats which they wear so coquettishly, we returned with a feeling of peace and content to our inn. While we sat on a little sofa waiting for our supper, I begged my friend to relate his adventures, which he did as follows :

" " You must know, my dear d'Herbeville, that after the bloody massacre of the 10th of August in Paris, I withdrew from all business, and remained as much as possible secluded in my house. However, one Sunday morning, as we could seldom hear Mass (for of course, as you know, the churches had been closed or profaned, and the clergy put to death), I went out very early in the

morning to the residence of a friend in Rue St. Antoine. There was a priest concealed in the house, who said Mass in a sort of sub-cellar. On leaving there, I was followed by a Jacobin, who tracked me to my own door. To my misfortune, it chanced that the editor of an aristocratic journal, who had been launching out considerably against the Republicans, lived next door to my friend, and the Republicans were anxious to take him in his own house. What do you think?—the Jacobins mistook me for the editor, and on the 22d of August I was suddenly seized and imprisoned in the Abbey of Saint-Germain, which was then the state prison. I was brought into a large hall, once the chapel of the monks, where I found seventeen other prisoners, each of whom slept on a camp-bed. I was assigned to number eighteen, which had been left vacant by d'Agremont, who was guillotined the evening previous. Just about dinner-hour, as the table was being prepared, Chantereine, a former colonel of the Royal Guard, seized with a fit of frenzy, snatched a knife from the table, plunged it three times into his breast, fell at my feet, and expired in a few moments. You may imagine how my heart beat.

“ ‘ Each succeeding day the number of prisoners increased ; but some of my first companions in captivity had been removed, only to be led to the guillotine. The dreadful 2d of September came. Our jailer entered more gloomy and depressed than usual ; he seemed troubled, surprised, and almost stupefied. He went over to the table, removed all

the knives, and addressing Captain Reding—an officer of the Swiss Guard, who on the 10th of August had received a severe wound in the arm, and who was our infirmarian—ordered him to leave the room immediately. We gathered eagerly around the man, asking him a thousand anxious questions. Instead of answering, he regarded us attentively, shrugged his shoulders, turned his back, and went out. In the square in front of the abbey we heard a great noise, which could only be compared to a cataract. The drums beat the *generale*, the tocsin sounded, the roar of cannon shook the windows; then succeeded a sudden silence, and we heard no more, save the sound of carriage-wheels.

“The chapel led by a little door to an ancient tower which, as is usual in Gothic architecture, arose at one side of the building, and the windows of which looked out upon the square. With some of the other prisoners I went up there, and I saw, as if approaching the abbey, three carriages escorted by a great crowd of horrible women, boys, and men, with hideous, demoniac faces, who, having reached the entrance, altogether, like a pack of wolves, howled: “*A la Force! à la Force!*” \* These carriages were full of bishops and priests, in secular dress, who, having attempted to escape the day’s massacre, were seized at the barriers and brought to the prison of Saint-Germain. Having entered the court, the carriage-doors were opened, and as each of the unfortunate clergymen alighted

\* Place de la Force was the square where stood the guillotine, hence this exclamation.

from the carriage the ruffians attacked him with axes, swords, and pikes, and thus cruelly put him to death. This sight filled us with horror, and we momentarily expected a similar fate. Their bodies were thrown into soldiers' chests and dragged to the ditch.

“ ‘ About four o'clock we heard a new tumult. We returned to our post of observation, and saw an unfortunate man laid upon the ground and literally cut to pieces ; then came another and another, then two, then three. The populace remained perfectly silent, but seemed to drink in the blood with their eyes, and laughed quietly at the groans and cries and supplications of their vicims. No one can ever understand how terrible this ominous silence upon the one side, and the despairing cries, upon the other, were to us, who saw the hatchets, pikes, and sabres of these monsters suspended, as it were, above our heads.

“ ‘ At seven o'clock in the evening, when the tumult had apparently subsided, we heard under our windows the cry : “ Death to the conspirators of the chapel ! ” “ Death ! ” we heard repeated even in the distance. “ Let not one single man escape ! ” “ Not one ! not one ! ” was echoed through the square. Then the jailer entered with one of the assassins, and ordered Captain Reding to arise ; and as he, on account of his wound, was unable to do so, he was dragged from his bed and down stairs, and a few moments after we heard his cries out in the square, where he was being cut to pieces. About midnight ten other ruffians entered, bearing



torches. They made us rise and stand at the foot of our beds ; then they counted us, and said, in a fierce and terrible voice : “ Woe to you all if one is wanting ! his neighbor shall be put to death without even being brought before the president. One shall answer for the other.”

“ “ The name of the president somehow gave us a gleam of hope, for we feared being led to slaughter without even the form of a trial. Next day fresh clamors from the populace, who still thirsted for blood, reached our ears. Just then two venerable priests appeared in the gallery of the chapel ; they were Père L’Enfant, confessor to the king, and the Abbé de Rastignac. They had come to announce to us that our last hour was near ; they exhorted us to bear death with fortitude, to ask pardon of God for our sins, and to have confidence in his mercy ; then they raised their hands to give us absolution and their blessing. Ah ! my dear d’Herbeville, if you could have seen us fall upon our knees, raise our hands likewise towards these ministers of the forgiveness of the Lord, striking our breasts, as we were absolved and received their blessing. Almost immediately after the two holy old men were led before the infuriated people, who at sight of them uttered a fierce death-cry, to which silence succeeded. We heard the strokes of axes and sabres, the groans of the victims, then the shout of “ Vive the nation ! ”

“ “ It almost seemed as if the holocaust of these priests had obtained for me my life. On the following day several of my comrades were brought

before the tribunal of blood, improvised in one of the abbey halls, and condemned to the torture. My turn came. I was asked if I was the editor of the aristocratic journal and the emissary of the Coblenz refugees. I replied most emphatically that I was not; I gave proofs of my identity. Then a Jacobin whom I chanced to know spoke up and declared that I was innocent. The tribunal acquitted me. My defender then seized me by the arm and dragged me out; I was saved! Therefore you see, my friend, why, in crossing the frontier of the realm of death—for so we must now call our unhappy country—it was most meet that I should give thanks to Mary, Mother of God, our help, our safety, and our hope.\*

“Then I proceeded,” continued d’Herbeville, “to give my friend an account of all that had befallen me, and we sat up till very late in the night, mutually consoling each other. The next day we set out in a little boat, and henceforth confined ourselves to the placid waters of that peaceful sea, with its gulfs, capes, delightful promontories, and little ports, through the incomparable region of the Genoa River, which is mirrored in the crystal wave. Of the beauty of this spot, that seemed to fill our souls with deep and calm enjoyment, I cannot attempt a description. Believe me, my dear count, that on the whole coast of Italy there is not such a series of fair and beautiful landscapes, be-

\* From the recollections of the same, De Méard, written in 1793. In this book there are descriptions which we actually shrank from quoting—we who still see the smoking plod of innumerable priests and good citizens at San Callisto in Rome.

ginning here at the little Port of Monaco, and succeeding each other from there to Genoa, from Genoa to Sestri in the Levant. I remember the beautiful palm-trees of Bordighera, which tower so grandly above the cedars, orange, lemon, and almond trees, and the smiling vineyards; you might imagine yourself transported to the luxuriant shores of Syria, from Tripoli to the foot of Libanus. Lower down you see Sanremo, with its rich orchards of fruit, and Diano Marina, San Maurizio, Oneglia, and Albenga, shaded with the pale green of the olive and the deeper green of the peach, cherry, and plum trees, and mingled with the sombre shadow of the pines, arising from the midst of ravines and deep gorges, and standing straight and thickly tufted along the banks, mirrored in the stream below, and forming a background to the bright luxuriance of the fields, the beauty of the orchards, and the grace of the gardens, with their rare, variegated flowers, unknown to colder regions. All this portion of the sea, with its little archipelago, its rocky banks, its blue waters, is skimmed by the countless skiffs of the fishermen, who move so gaily from prow to poop of their nut-shell barks, and ply their oars or raise their little sails.

“Sailing thus along with a fresh breeze, we often landed in the shady bays, or at one of the ports, to take our dinner in the pretty little inns on the seashore, where we sometimes passed the night.

“The morning of the second day we entered the Gulf of Noli, which, with easy and gracious descent,

flows downward to the sea. Its banks are covered with small, white pebbles, which gleam through the water, and seem to invite the traveller in the hot and dusty summer day to refresh himself in its clear waters.

“The ancient citadel of Noli, with its battlements and crenellated towers, so well calculated to withstand the fiercest assaults, was a novel and pleasant sight to us. These innumerable towers had doubtless been erected against the attacks of the Saracens and corsairs who, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, infested the coasts of Liguria, landing suddenly, devastating the towns, and dragging the inhabitants into slavery on the Barbary shore.

“After dinner we embarked again in our little boat, spent the night at Savona, and thence still coasted along these delightful shores, and were charmed by the view of Albizzola, Varaze, and Cogolletto, which latter place the country people declare to be the birth-place of Christopher Columbus. Passing onwards by Arenzano and Voltri, we beheld the sumptuous villas of Sestri and San Pier d’Arena, which surpass in beauty and elegance those of our most powerful kings or nobles, and are only equalled by those of the Venetians—a fact which clearly proves how rich, great, and magnificent are the citizens of the commercial republics of Italy.

“I cannot tell you what was our astonishment and delight at the sea view of Genoa. France is beautiful, great, rich in the fairest towns, villages, and cities; but it must be admitted, without disrespect to our country, that she has not one hun-

dredth part of the beautiful variety which is perhaps unique in the world, and is here presented in so brief a space. Nature and art seemed to contend for the mastery in embellishing Italy. Great kingdoms have the advantage of superior strength over little ones, but they do not always surpass them in point of beauty. In the former there is one great array of grandeur, magnificence, ornament, and wealth, while their capital city is the key, the port, the universal emporium of all the skill, pomp, and splendor of the state, which in the eyes of strangers, and even of the natives, exist in it alone; but in little states, on the contrary, the strength and skill is divided into several principalities, and both luxuries and articles of all kinds are multiplied. In France Paris is everything; the provinces are but tributaries of the metropolis; and if in former times they had not been divided into the grand fiefs of the crown, which, therefore, made each province under the domain of a prince, who had his own chief city, we should not to-day have to admire the cathedrals of Strasburg, Lyons, Tours, and Bruges, besides many other great and noble monuments in Bordeaux, Dijon, Arles, Châlons, Rheims, and the principal cities of Normandy, Brittany, Provence, and the other ancient divisions of the kingdom of France.

“The little republics and the smaller states of Italy have made her the wonder of the world. Each of the heads of these governments jealously ornaments, embellishes, and seeks to immortalize, so to say, the city where he dwells. Hence do we



meet almost at every step in Italy, which is not one-third the size of France, more capital cities than Europe altogether can furnish. For instance, leaving the Ligurian Sea and proceeding towards the Adriatic, we find Genoa, Milan, Pavia, Bergamo, Cremona, Brescia, Verona, Padua, and Venice. These cities, with their palaces, temples, gardens, fountains, bridges, triumphal arches, museums, art galleries containing the rarest paintings and statues, libraries, hospitals, together with its various public and private buildings, all recall the ancient design of making themselves great among the greatest nations. Mantua, Ferrara, Bologna, Pisa, Siena, Florence, Rimini, Orvieto, Perugia, Rome, Naples, Palermo, were all, and are all, the dwelling places of kings and lords; very petty, perhaps, compared to the King of France, yet they have monuments which make them centres of attraction to all Europe, the admiration of princes and emperors who visit them, without hoping, however, to create anything similar at home. Observe, however, that at present I speak merely of the wealth and material greatness offered to the eye; were I to take into consideration the institutions, laws, statutes, customs, and the wonderful harmony existing between the government and the people, I should never finish."

"Why, my dear d'Herbeville," said the count, "what an ardent partisan of Italy you have become! I admire and thank you for it; but I confess I neither share your views nor understand them."

“You would most clearly understand them,” replied d’Herbeville, “if you knew how much harm is done by many of those Frenchified Italians, who, thoughtless and unreflecting, seek nothing better than the subversion of all the ancient laws of Italy, in order to form a republic one and indivisible, like that of France. And although this would be an utter impossibility for the Italians, nevertheless the mere attempt would bring misfortune and ruin, and a deplorable destruction of all order, upon the country. We owe to the secret societies of Freemasons the absurd and iniquitous views which filter like poisoned water through the foundations of that glorious edifice of grandeur, wealth, and nobility, and the true liberty and religion of the Italians, that has made it the mark for the envy and hatred of her unnatural children.”

“Ho! there, now,” said d’Almavilla, laughing, “you are in bed and not in the pulpit; put some water in your wine. Who has put all these fine ideas into your head? Who wants to deprive Italy of her happiness? Who is the thief that would so cruelly rob her of it?”

“Do not consider this matter as a jest, my dear count. I am a Frenchman, and have heard many of them speak openly, and I tell you I should never have thought what a flame is covered by these ashes. May it please God that you never see the French Republicans coming themselves to put a match to this mine. I see that you are ignorant of all that is going on in Italy, and I also see that Count

Fedrigotti and Baron Malfatti do not seem to have so much inclination to laugh."

"Quite the contrary," said Count Fedrigotti; "for we have been the living witnesses here a few years ago of the various artifices employed by Freemasonry to increase the number of its members, and at the same time its power and the success of its designs against Italy. The short stay amongst us of that impostor, Cagliostro, gave us some idea of them. Our people considered him a miraculous physician, a magician to whom the devil had given immense wealth, and still tell us things of him which seem like the wildest dreams; but men—sensible and enlightened men—knew perfectly well that he was simply a practised master of Masonry, a conspiring courtier. But as he was aware that the Government of Venice is always suspicious of innovations, and might put its claw upon him, he settled upon the frontier, and set up a shop of new merchandise—namely, illuminatism, under the trade name of Egyptian Freemasonry; and here in Roveredo, I assure you, it brought him a high price. The bidders came under the mask of disease; but rheumatism, lumbago, and all other maladies disappeared at the occult meetings of these equally occult societies, whose germ and roots are in France, England, and Germany."

"And how come you to be so well informed on this subject?" said d'Almavilla, somewhat maliciously.

"How am I so well informed? Just in this way: that I was invited a hundred times to give my

name ; that several persons made most strenuous efforts to make me believe in all this and swallow more water than I chanced to desire ; while I knew and saw that they were planning some absurd project for the redemption of Italy from the hands of priests and tyrants."

"Cagliostro made use of every sort of deviltry," said Baron Malfatti. "But, believe me, the Tyrol also has its secret, and even its open, emissaries to attract the province to the society, in order to tear from its very heart the Catholic faith, which has happily taken such deep root, bringing with it, as it ever does, valor and goodness."

"If these people make such violent efforts," replied d'Herbeville, "to gain this extreme limit of Italy, imagine what they would do to pervert the great Italian states, and especially the Republic of Venice, which, being aristocratic in form, is as a needle in the eyeball of hatred and envy."

"And here we see," said Fedrigotti, "the perversity of human judgment. Would you believe it?—the nobles themselves, and of them the richest, most powerful and influential, secretly attend their meetings. The refinement of wickedness in these secret societies is such that the most enlightened allow themselves to be taken in, and the most pious become the enemies of their country. When I think of all the ancient precautions taken by the Venetian Senate, so eager to remove from the republic even the most remote danger of plo's or innovations, and then see it as it is to-day, I can scarcely help laughing. There, where they cut off the head

of the Doge Marino Faliero, suspected of tyranny; where they deposed the Doge Foscaro; where his son Jacopo was condemned; where Antonio Foscarini and other illustrious personages were also punished on the merest suspicion of having negotiated with strangers to the prejudice of the republic—there, where they made prisoners in their own palace of the doge and his intimate councilors, like sultans in a harem; where they forbade him to visit the ambassadors of the Allied Powers, or to be knighted by them—to-day they welcome, caress, and admit to the most important offices of the republic numbers of gentlemen Masons, who have sworn to overthrow all the thrones and powers of Italy, and abandon it to the people, or rather to the vile and ungovernable mob, the refuse of taverns, gambling-houses, and similar haunts of iniquity.”

“Exactly!” said d’Herbeville. “This is the newest and strangest phenomenon that has ever been seen under the sun since the epoch when civil government first arose to direct the human family. Plots, conspiracies, seditions, mutinies, rebellions have been got up by inferiors to subdue their superiors, as your Macchiavelli says,\* but never anything like these secret societies, which seek to turn the world upside down and subvert all human and divine institutions, make use of the great them-

\* “The grave and natural enmity which exists between the nobles and the people, and proceeds from the desire of the former to command the latter, and their refusal to obey, is the cause of all the evils which arise in cities.”—Macch., “Storia,” v. iii.



selves, and of them the instruments for the elevation of the vile creatures who seek to become their rulers. Human pride aspires to supremacy; and nobles, lords, and princes, perhaps, more than any others desire it. Nevertheless, they are misled by the sophistries of these societies so far as to betray their natural interests, cast down their power and digni'y into the dust, and allow themselves to be conquered and oppressed by cowardly and miserable robbers who, in political agitations, come to the surface like the filth which rises from its deepest caves to the surface of a troubled sea. That has already happened in France, and, if God does not prevent it, will happen in Italy at the instigation and by the aid of French arms, which I almost seem to see gleaming on the summit of the Alps!"

"Bah! bah! do not trouble yourself, my dear d'Herbeville," said Count d'Almavilla somewhat sharply. "Do you not think that if the danger was imminent, the Italian princes would unite and form among themselves a close alliance to oppose the invasion of France, which, according to you, is to come upon us unexpectedly?"

"I am surprised that you, a skilful diplomat, should be ignorant that that of which you speak is already taking place! A friend who was saved almost by a miracle at the time of the king's arrest, and who is now travelling with the Count d'Artois, told me that the Italian league had already been decided upon by the princes, and they only awaited the concurrence of the Republic of Venice. The

Republicans, seeing that the French *emigrés* had collected at Coblenz, and being aware of the treaty of Pilnitz between the German potentates, called upon Carnot, Minister of War, to raise without delay an army which should not only defend the republic, but also exterminate the enemies of the French people beyond the frontiers. The minister caused it to be announced with flourish of trumpets that the republic was about to rise in arms, and the citizens volunteered in thousands. The greater portion of these forces consist of the veriest scum of the earth ; but their fury will make the world tremble. Woe to whatever place shall see their fleets approach its shore ! Meanwhile, France dreams of nothing but war and victory, and these rude militia are being trained with the greatest assiduity into disciplined soldiers. Monge de Beaume, a fierce Republican, has established parade-grounds where the flower of the French youth are trained ; he has founded the Polytechnic School. Bertholet, Fourcroy, and Chaptal are training the volunteers, concentrating the masses, erecting camps, training horses, and bringing all the military arts to perfection ; for, after all, the valiant French soul still remains hidden beneath their rags, and gives forth fair promises of future military glory : they will do wonders. Whilst the Jacobins prepare for war, Cabanis has devised a new and convenient hospital system ; he is recruiting extensively for the body of military surgeons ; and, at the same time, Larrey has brought into use ambulances or light carts, which go hither and thither over the battle-fields,

receiving the wounded and caring for them in the midst of the battle.”

“But you are representing us as in the midst of war,” said Almavilla; “I perceive that you have the warm imagination of a true Frenchman.”

“Frenchman or German has nothing to do with the matter; all I know is that in Venice it is rumored (I heard it whispered by two French *émigrés* under the *Procurate vecchie*) that the Count d’Hauteville, first minister of your King of Sardinia, held an interview with Count Rocco Sanfermo, the Venetian ambassador to your court, to invite him to use his most earnest endeavors to induce the Venetian lords to enter into a league with Piedmont, Naples, Tuscany, Rome, and Austria, and, if possible, to bring in Spain and the Duchy of Parma; these princes had no desire to make war on France, but only to oppose the invasions of the French should they attempt the conquest of Italy. Sanfermo wrote a despatch to his Most Serene Highness on the 5th day of November, 1791. This despatch was transmitted by the state officials to the College of Wise Men (*dei Savii*) at Pregadi, who, to the great surprise of the Allied Powers, disapproved of this league, which would have been the bulwark of Italian independence, threatened by a foreign power.

“The Chevalier di San Marco—Andrea Fontana—from the Legation at Naples, insisted and urged the most convincing reasons in favor of the league. The ambassadors from Vienna, London, and even Paris strongly supported the Italian alliance; but

the nobility remained obstinate. The poor ambassadors and attachés were astonished and, we may say, stupefied to see the members of so wise and prudent a senate persisting in maintaining *unarmed neutrality* when all Europe was taking up arms; but these loyal and upright citizens knew not that some of the members of the wise men of Pregadi had been enrolled as Freemasons in 1785 at Roveredo and other places by Cagliostro, and now, most cruelly abusing the confidence of their associates, did not forward the despatches of the ambassadors to the senate, and thus left it in ignorance of all that had transpired.

“What deuced idiots they were!” said Almavilla.

“My friends, I am a Frenchman,” continued d’Herbeville, “and as such have had the confidence of many of my countrymen; whilst among my friends I have numbered many who sat in the councils of the wise, but who are more or less blinded by the French smoke, which conceals from them the true interests of their country, and who unhappily judge from a false point of view the strangers who would despoil it of every good, its liberty, and its glory.”\*

The conversation between d’Herbeville and the other gentlemen had just reached this point, when the daughter of the hostess came to announce that supper was ready and about being served. The two

\*The Carbonari of our own days do precisely the same thing; they would give Italy into the claws of Satan rather than leave it in peace under its natural lords. Let the reader, for proofs of this, consult the records of the Galletti trial in 1844.

young ladies were well pleased, for the political conversation had not been very amusing to them. The men, on the contrary, were loath to leave this subject, which touched upon the danger to their national and domestic interests. However, they took leave of d'Herbeville and went down to the dining-room, a pretty little apartment on the first story, the wooden floor of which, after having been well washed with water and sand, was polished and waxed till it shone like a mirror. The room had chairs and tables of polished walnut ; on the wall hung a Madonna of Caravaggio, with robe and mantle of red on a blue ground, and the head crowned with an imperial diadem. A little copper lamp hung from the ceiling, and burned unceasingly before the image of the Virgin. The table was laid in the middle of the room, and covered with a table-cloth of dazzling white, save that it, as well as the napkins, had an embroidered border of red and blue, with groups of acorns at the four corners. In the middle of the table was a large mug of buff glass, containing a beautiful nosegay of fragrant pinks, red and white roses, jasmines, and variously-colored tulips. The young ladies were both pleased and surprised at the pretty embroideries upon the cloth and napkins, and at the tasteful appearance of the table.

The young girl of the inn stood near the door, dipped her fingers in the little font which hung near by, and offered holy water to each one as they entered. D'Almavilla, out of courtesy to the pretty young girl, was obliged to do what he had



not done for years. But what seemed to them most odd was the appearance of four little girls in their Sunday dresses, standing at the four corners of the table, holding in their hands four candles wrapped in white napkins and ornamented with prettily-cut papers to catch the melted wax. All the women were in a flurry, and the hostess, in her pretty red skirt and head-dress, was just placing upon the table the tureen, containing a sort of milk-soup, which the travellers found delicious. Next came a great side of boiled beef, tender and juicy, covered with a sort of sauce composed of broth made of the marrow of beef, and flavored with grated cheese, which they found excellent. Then followed stewed hare, with half-sweet, half-sour sauce, containing pistachio nuts; this was followed by a haunch of roast veal, which was most appetizing. Last they served the *strudel*, a large cake in the form of a serpent, with a light crust, stuffed with pears and apricots, which was a most delicate dish, especially when the crust was made by these mountaineers with delicious fresh butter. The dessert was of cherries, wild strawberries, and sugar-pears. In a word, it was a little supper which might have tempted any one.

The guests did full justice to the repast, their appetites having been whetted by their long journey on horseback. The good hostess was pleased at the evident satisfaction of her guests. She glanced at her assistants, as if to say, "Did I not tell you I was a first-rate cook?"

Count Fedrigotti could not help asking :

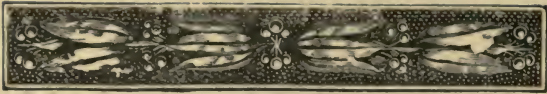
“Will you tell me, my good woman, why you use these little girls for candlesticks?”

“Why? Because you are lords. For muleteers or peasants who pass here we hang a lantern to yonder hook, or use those large wooden candlesticks; but when the Prince de Lodron, the Count de Castelbarco, or the Baron di Truxes stops here, we could not think of letting him see those ugly wooden affairs; and as I saw at once from your horses, servants, and rich attire that you were great lords and ladies, we did our best to give you a fine welcome. These four little girls will sup with me, and are quite content, because they are poor.”

The gentlemen gave each of the children a *petizza*, which, in the currency of the country, is worth about ten cents, and the little ones were so delighted that they could scarcely contain themselves. Then the company began to discuss their intended journey of the following day, and Lida said:

“If you wish, I will remain here to keep Monsieur d’Herbeville company; for I am sure he will require a great many things which the people of the house cannot understand. I am certain that upon your return you will find him sitting up.”

The count thanked her for his friend. It was decided that they should return in two days, and, having gone up to bid d’Herbeville good-night, they all retired to rest.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### AN HOUR LOST.

THE night was already far advanced when our travellers retired to rest. The two young ladies were somewhat afraid at the idea of sleeping alone in the room assigned to them, which was at some distance from the other apartments. They asked Theodora, the hostess' daughter, if she would keep them company during the night. The good creature willingly consented, and brought a little mattress, which she laid upon the ground, and improvised for herself a little couch at the foot of the young ladies' bed. Lida, who was very much fatigued by her journey, said a short prayer, crossed herself, and went to bed ; but Lauretta, according to her usual animal-like custom, without even making the sign of the cross, undressed herself, and getting into bed, disposed herself to sleep. The young Cimbri, after having assisted the young ladies to undress and seen them comfortably settled in bed, took holy water from the font, crossed herself on the forehead, mouth, and breast, and sprinkled a little round the room, then knelt down at the head of her couch.

Lida raised her head, rested it on her hand, and

with deep emotion watched the pretty young girl, who, after having worked hard all day long, knelt so modestly, with head bent, eyes cast down, and hands clasped, praying with fervor, recollection, and most edifying devotion. The color of her rosy cheeks was deepened by the vermillion flush which overspread her white neck and forehead like an aureola in the eyes of God, her breast heaved gently, her blonde ringlets fell softly on her neck, so fervently bent. Oh! what a beautiful sight is a virgin who, as the rosy morning gleams and glitters on the pearl-like drops of heavenly dew, consecrates the first moments of the day, and again the last of the night, as an agreeable holocaust to her Lord, who preserves her heart pure and her soul spotless. Every soul which raises itself in prayer to its Creator is always beautified by a ray from the Source of eternal light; but the virgin, in the candor of her soul, receives within her when she prays so much of heaven that she presents to earth the best reflection of the seraphic beatitude.

Lida contemplated the celestial beauty of this innocent creature, and her heart was so touched that sweet and holy tears of compunction filled her eyes. At length Theodora crossed herself, kissed the floor, and rose to prepare for bed. Lauretta still slept on in a deep and heavy slumber. Lida said to the young Cimbri in a low voice:

“My dear child, it seems to me that, after the fatigues of the day, you say too long prayers.”

“My lady,” replied the other, “are we not all Christians? Our Lord bestows so many benefits

upon us during the day that it seems only just that at night, before closing our eyes, we should spend a few moments in giving him thanks. In the morning, as soon as we rise, should we not ask of God, of Mary, and our good angel to preserve us and guard us from all sin ?”

“ Oh ! yes,” replied Lida ; “ I, too, pray and give thanks, but you, who have been working so hard all day, scarcely need to pray so long.”

“ Prayer, my lady, does not fatigue me ; it rather rests me. When I pray with mamma, I say even longer prayers. To-night I hurried because it is later than usual. I only said the ‘ Angelus,’ the ‘ Lord, I thank thee,’ the ‘ Our Father,’ in honor of the Passion of our Lord ; the seven ‘ Hail Marys,’ in honor of the seven sorrows of the Virgin ; three ‘ Glories be to the Father,’ in honor of the Heart of Jesus ; the Apostles’ Creed, that I may be preserved in the holy faith ; and a few little prayers which our pastor taught me, they are so pretty and pious. I always end with a little prayer for the soul of my poor father.”

“ Then your father is dead ? How long is it since God took him from you ?”

“ Mamma is just two years out of mourning ; I am now sixteen years and three months, and I was scarcely thirteen when he died. Poor papa ! he loved me so much.”

“ He died at home, I suppose ?”

“ Ah ! dear lady, he was murdered. He had gone to sell cattle at the fair of Levico, about the beginning of June. When all the people of the village



began to return, papa did not come. We waited and waited, for we knew he had been at Lavis and at Naimark. My mother wept; she sent letters in all directions; she despatched messengers; but nothing was heard. At length the poor soul of my father, which was suffering in purgatory, appeared to ask for prayers; for though he did not speak, we all understood what he wanted, and all who were related to him began to pray fervently."

"Oh! but to whom did this good soul appear? Were noises heard, blows, groans, or sighs during the night, or the jingling of the glasses or vessels on the shelves?"

"No, my lady; it was not in that way. I will tell you: One evening in the month of July a canon of the chapter was returning on horseback from a little villa, and as he went he recited the Vespers and Compline in his breviary. When he came to the 'De Profundis' for the dead, it was dark night. A foot-servant accompanied him. They were pursuing a cross-road that leads off from the high road, and when they had come about half way, the servant cried out: 'Father, see that little blue flame near the edge of the road; what can it be? As I live, it seems to come near us. Father, it is certainly a soul in pain.'

"The canon said a prayer, raised his hand, made the sign of the cross, and passed on. The poor servant kept close to the saddle; but the little flame followed them, although the priest rode on at a good pace. The servant clung on to the horse behind his master, the canon put spurs to the horse,

the animal began to gallop, and the flame disappeared.

“Having reached home, trembling violently, the canon sent for the doctor, and told him what he had seen.

“‘Could you tell the precise spot,’ asked the doctor, ‘whence this flame seemed to arise?’

“‘Yes,’ answered the canon; ‘it was just at the edge of the path, at the foot of the poplar, between the aspen and the ancient elm.’

“‘You will find,’ said the doctor, ‘that there is a corpse buried in that spot.’

“On the following day the same physician, with a notary and two writers, repaired to the place and had it dug up. Scarcely had they begun to turn up the earth with their pickaxes than they found a corpse very much decomposed, so that it was impossible to recognize it. They found on the body a pocket-book with some papers bearing my father’s name. It seemed that he had been murdered, robbed, and buried at the foot of the poplar. But my mother was almost heartbroken; she had several Masses said, and we pray for the repose of his soul every night.”\*

The poor girl wept bitter tears as she spoke. Lida did her best to console her: “Theodora,”

\* Every one knows that wherever animal matter becomes putrid under the earth, there is sure to arise phosphorescent lights, composed of oxygen and phosphorus, which, during the summer, often form a little flame, that the common people take for the souls of the departed. When the frightened people fly, the current of air blows the flame in their direction, and thus it appears to pursue them; but if they approach it, it will grow less and disappear.

she said, "I will have a Mass said for your father's soul to-morrow. But now go to bed and try to sleep."

Next morning the travellers departed to visit the other portions of the Cimbric country. Lida began her office of taking care of Monsieur d'Herbeville, who often wept as he thought of his dear children, so cruelly murdered before his eyes.

The surgeon, finding that the swelling in his arm had almost disappeared, permitted him to rise. He was comfortably seated in an old arm-chair which the hostess brought into the room, and Lida having placed a pillow at his shoulder, d'Herbeville could sit up without feeling either pain or fatigue. He wished very much for some historical works, but none were to be found in the neighborhood; however, Lida came again to his aid by lending him a book which she carried in her satchel in order to answer the scepticism of the count and the raillery of Lauretta. This was the "Pensées" of Jamin, in which he most clearly states the articles of our faith, and skilfully refutes the sophisms of Voltaire and other infidels of his stamp.

Lida conversed on the various subjects treated in this work with d'Herbeville, who, being a good Christian, was much pleased with its contents, and often broke out into vigorous denunciations of the infidelity which had been the ruin of France. He gave long dissertations on this subject, for he readily detected the sophisms of the infidels, abhorred their blasphemies, and ridiculed their stupid and meaningless arguments.

Whilst d'Herbeville, with his generous French enthusiasm, was declaiming thus, Theodora entered the room on tip-toe, her face red as a cherry. Approaching Lida, she said in her graceful way:

“My lady, will you have the goodness to assist me in a work of charity? As you know German, will you help a good young peasant girl, who has come accompanied by the parish priest to ask a great service of this strange gentleman? I beg of you to translate for her, for the love of the Blessed Virgin, who will guard you from every danger.”

“If the priest speaks Italian, this gentleman will readily understand him,” said Lida. “Where is he?”

“Out there with Anna,” replied Theodora. “I recommend her to you, because she is one of the best girls in the village, pious and modest. My first cousin wishes to marry her; but there are many things to prevent it, and, if the French gentleman cannot assist her, the poor girl will have a long time to wait.”

Lida quickly translated their request to Monsieur d'Herbeville, and he answered that they might be shown in at once. At a sign from Lida Theodora went out, and soon returned with the priest and Anna, who was a tall, fine-looking girl, with a face resembling milk and rosy apples, a great head of bright blonde hair, blue eyes with a sweet expression in them, which spoke of a gentle, peaceful soul. The priest was old, his head bald, his long, white hair falling over his shoulders.

D'Herbeville, from his arm-chair, bowed pro-

foundly to the grave and venerable priest, and, having invited him to be seated, begged Lida to ask what he could do for him.

“Sir,” said the priest, through his fair interpreter, “you are a Frenchman. During your awful revolution you must have seen, and perhaps experienced, a great deal of suffering, which was of every-day occurrence. If you have known misfortune, you will be able to compassionate the woes of others. My young parishioner whom you see here is in her nineteenth year. She is, as you also perceive, in the flower of her youth and beauty; she is modest, honest, well brought up, loving God, and obedient to her superiors; in a word, she is a model young peasant. The poor girl is an orphan, both her parents being dead; her aunt is a poor widow who brought her up for charity, but with the utmost affection. In the month of April of last year she was hired as cook by a wealthy gentleman of our province, who made the most tempting offers of wages, and a promise of presents at New Year’s, Easter, and the Assumption. She was also to receive, after the vine-feasts, a scarlet waist, a warm delaine skirt for the winter, and a lighter one for the summer. Besides this, as she was known to be a remarkably good cook, her employer promised to cancel a debt of fifty florins lent to her father during his lifetime, and which still stood against him in the books of the house. Her aunt, delighted with these conditions, allowed the girl to take service with the gentleman without consulting me. When I learned what had taken



place, I was both grieved and displeased, for I knew this man's unscrupulous character. He was originally a sheep-butcher, and lived very humbly on the fruits of his labor, usually killing only about one sheep or lamb in the week ; when he killed two, it was a gala day for him. But my man suddenly opened a large cattle-market, and, attending all the fairs, bought great droves of cattle, magnificent oxen, fine calves, and had them killed at his slaugh'er-house in the town. Every one was astonished at his luxurious style of living and this great display, unable to imagine whence he drew the money to make these extensive sales.

“ He had at his house a little girl, the daughter of one of his brothers, who had been killed in a quarrel. This poor child was deaf and dumb ; she scarcely ever saw any one, and her uncle had accustomed her to speak by signs, which she perfectly understood. While the butcher was still poor, drunken, and vicious, it chanced that a Venetian lord of the noble house of Vallaresso, one of whose villas stood almost upon the confines of our country, and who lived there alone with a very young child, received a letter couched in the following terms :

“ ‘ YOUR EXCELLENCY : If before to-morrow night you do not place a purse of a thousand ducats at the foot of the little cypress in the valley of the fountain, two days from now your child and yourself will be dead, your stables and barns be set on fire, and your hay-stacks burned in the fields.’ ”

“ The gentleman was alarmed. He placed the

thousand ducats under the designated tree, but at the same time secretly apprised the police. Eight bailiffs were stationed in ambush. They waited in the brushwood until break of day ; no living soul approached the spot ; then the corporal gave a signal, and, having collected his troop, they went over to the tree to recover the purse. It had disappeared. All their searches were vain ; nothing was ever discovered. Some years ago I went to attend one of my oldest parishioners, who was very near death, and she told me that the affair of the thousand ducats was a trick of the butcher ; for on that very day she had gone to a little hill close by the cypress-tree to gather leaves for her goats, and she saw some one place something in the grass, who had no sooner departed than the deaf-mute came from behind some bushes, ran over and seized what had been placed at the foot of the tree, hid it in her apron, and ran away as fast as her legs could carry her. Immediately after the butcher bought a quantity of cattle, and his niece died of the colic.

“ This rogue of a butcher was, as you see, a crafty and scheming character. He changed his sheep and lambs for cows and oxen, and succeeded so well that he grew rich, and at length became the wealthiest man in the country. He bought lands and country houses and grand domains, and leaving trade, began to live as a fine gentleman ; but he always retained a flavor of the stalls. He increased his riches by usury, tearing the very flesh from the bones of the poor people who were his victims.

Anna's father once borrowed twenty florins from him to buy a cow. He lent it to him willingly, but he took care to place forty-five florins to George's account. Scarcely was he dead than the usurer cited his widow to appear before him ; the widow dying also, he cited Anna's guardians. And it was about this time that he hired the girl as cook, having in reality the very worst motives for so doing ; but he soon perceived that the good girl could not be deceived or misled by his snares. What did he then do to gain his end ? He brought her to a little house in the country, upon which was a half-ruined Gothic tower, whose sole entrance was by a sort of bridge that led up to it. The wretch, seeing that gentle means were unavailing, shut the poor girl up in a miserable room in the tower, which had a solitary window giving out upon the barn-yard. He kept her prisoner there for a considerable time, never ceasing to torment her with his threats and promises.

“At length, one day, by the mercy of God, Anna saw the hay-carts coming from the fields to be unloaded in the barn without. They unloaded the hay at the foot of the tower, and were to return the next day to toss it upon their forks and store it away in the barn. She measured with her eyes the distance between the window of her prison and the pile of hay, and, observing the great height, shivered and shook with fear ; still, she prostrated her-elf on the ground, and recommended herself with her whole soul to Our Lady of Deliverance, who is honored in our little church. At midnight

Anna went to the window, listened breathlessly to hear if the stable-boys slept; all was still. She made the sign of the cross, invoked Jesus and Mary, and sprang daringly from the window of the tower.

“The shock of falling through the air took away her breath, and she fell unconscious on the great pile of hay, sinking into its soft depths. Her swoon lasted for some time; then she recovered consciousness, shook herself, and slowly raised her head. The night air soon revived her; she arose, came out from the hay, and, finding herself unhurt, knelt down to thank God and Our Lady. Then having arranged her disordered dress, she opened the little gate of the barnyard and stole out softly. She journeyed all night through lanes and by-ways, with which she was well acquainted, continued her journey all the succeeding day, and slept at a farm-house, then hastened on during the following day, and early on the third reached my presbytery, where she related all that had befallen her. I need not tell you, my dear young lady, of the old butcher’s anger when he found that the dove had escaped his clutches. He accused her of theft; he had an execution on her poor furniture for the fifty florins—having before made the debt forty-five, he now added five for the expenses of justice. Therefore, if this good French gentleman does not assist her in his goodness, the poor child will be thrown out of house and home to-morrow.”

At this pitiful tale Lida actually wept; all at

once she threw her arms round Anna's neck, and embraced her with generous familiarity. When the story was repeated to Monsieur d'Herbeville, he was almost as much touched as Lida. Without saying a word, he took a little key and handed it to Lida, who asked with her eyes what she was to do with it, till Monsieur d'Herbeville said at last :

“Have the goodness to open that little chest; you will find in it a roll of gold pieces.”

“Here are seventy florins,” added he, counting them out, “fifty for that scoundrel, twenty for Anna.”

Then he handed the priest a couple of sovereigns, saying :

“Say a couple of Masses in honor of Our Lady of Deliverance for my sou's welfare and the repose of the souls of my wife and children.”

Without giving them time to express their gratitude, he politely dismissed the priest and his young parishioner.

The Count d'Almavilla and his companions returned from their excursion about evening of the second day. They were delighted to find d'Herbeville seated in his large arm chair, and endless were the anecdotes of their journey which they had to tell. The count was never weary of the beauty of the places he had visited, and dwelt particularly on the kindness and courtesy of the people. He told of a fair where he had seen numbers of the beautiful Cimbri women, so tall and well formed, with their white, fresh complexion and their cheerful, off-hand manner. He loudly extolled the honesty



of their transactions; he admired the beauty of the fine, well-fed cattle, their shining skin, their polished horns, and long, swinging tails, and declared them, in a word, the finest of Tyrolese oxen, and, whether white or red or dappled, splendid to see and excellent to eat.

Another special attraction at the fair were cups chiselled and carved in a most admirable manner, besides larger vessels which they called *piadena*,\* and kitchen spoons, salt-cellars, pepper-boxes, needle-cases, curry-combs. All these things are prettily fashioned by the Cimbri during the long winter evenings, at the fireside and in the stables, and they are carved and fashioned with inimitable rustic grace.

A fine supper was served in honor of their return, and in the middle of the table the hostess triumphantly placed a large tart called *selten*, composed of jelly and confections, with currants, raisins, and syrup, thickened with flour and flavored with myrtle-leaves. The cover of the pie is ornamented with various arabesques, landscapes, and figures of animals in sugar-candy. *Selten* is a German word signifying rare or exquisite.

The four little girls who acted as candlesticks did not fail to be present. Lauretta had purchased a flame-colored cape for each of them, with which the children were so delighted that they kept constantly looking down, admiring their new article

\* *Piadena* seems to us a provincial idiom for *patina*, a large, hollow dish. The Tyrolese use these dishes to chop, or to cleanse from gravel or weeds the wheat, barley, or other grain.

of finery. Lida told them poor Anna's sad story, Monsieur d'Herbeville's generous deed, the poor girl's joy, the tears of the good priest, and the great delight of Theodora, who had informed the whole village. At a late hour the party separated, and, worn out, retired to rest.

On the following morning they took breakfast with d'Herbeville. Then Lida, Count Fedrigotti, and the Baron Malfatti assisted at the Mass celebrated for d'Herbeville's wife and children, and admired the great devotion of the villagers who knelt round the Blessed Virgin's altar. Lida having briefly related to Theodora the fearful story of the d'Herbeville family, and she having told all the village, the men and women wept with compassion as they prayed for them before the statue of the Mother of God.

On their return to the inn they all sat round conversing, and, one thing leading to another, Lauretta said, addressing Monsieur d'Herbeville :

“You told us the other morning that you met in Venice a gentleman of the suite of Louis XVI., who accompanied him in his flight from Paris, and was present at his arrest, himself escaping almost by a miracle. I have heard so many different versions of this attempted flight and arrest that I do not know what to believe.”

“Signora,” replied d'Herbeville, “the affair is not one which it is easy to unravel; for in it there are the ineffable mysteries of Providence, which it is not given to man to penetrate. It is a labyrinth, of which it would take more than mortal eyes to

find the clue. In a word, there seems to have been some misunderstanding in the arrangements for the flight, and this very misunderstanding was the cause of its failure."

"But how could they possibly misunderstand each other?" said Lauretta.

"Every possible precaution had been taken, but we well may say: 'If the Lord does not guard the city, those who guard it watch in vain.' Queen Marie Antoinette, seeing that the life of the king and their children were more and more threatened, turned towards Lord de Fersen, a member of the Swiss Guard, in whom she had full and entire confidence, knowing his devotion, courage, and prudence, and, calling him, said:

"'Fersen, save us; I confide the lives of the king and our children to God and you.'

"De Fersen was not a man to adopt half-measures; he did not say much, but he acted. It was absolutely necessary that he should have some one to aid him in this difficult and arduous enterprise. He chose the Marquis de Bouillé, a cousin of Lafayette, who was a man of undoubted loyalty to the king, and a brave and trustworthy general, who in the American War of Independence had won glorious and bloody laurels.

"The Marquis de Bouillé was in command of the frontier army encamped in Lorraine, Alsace, Franche-Comté, Champagne, and all along the line between Switzerland and Sambre. He had under his orders eighty battalions and four hundred squadrons of cavalry."

“My God!” cried Lida, “with such a powerful force could they not save the king from the dragon claws of the National Assembly?”

“Force of arms and of horse,” said d’Herbeville, “avail not without the help of God.\*

“The king sent to ask from the Marquis de Bouillé the most minute particulars of his plan for the flight. The general replied that there were two ways by which Montmédy might be reached, one by way of Rheims, the other by Varennes. The second presented many obstacles, especially in the difficulty of procuring post-horses, for any number sent in advance would awaken the suspicions of the Jacobins. The king wrote to De Bouillé that it would be also necessary to procure a new carriage for the journey. The latter respectfully advised the king to abandon this design; for that the new form of conveyance would also be a cause of suspicion, and that therefore he would do better to travel in one of the usual English carriages. He added that the road to Varennes would also be dangerous, because the squadrons of cavalry would be certain to attract attention.”

“The advice was good,” said d’Almavilla. “The royal road to Rheims, leading across the frontiers, is a more frequented way, and would be therefore less suspected.”

“Well, however,” replied d’Herbeville, “the

\* In 1848 God was pleased to save from the conspirators and from the hands of the furious mob the unworthy and usurping Louis Philippe, and yet permitted not that the good Louis XVI. should be saved. Who can penetrate the eternal decrees of God?

king, having been crowned at Rheims, feared to be recognized there, and resolved to take the road to Varennes. He would not use one of the ordinary carriages, and persisted in having his new conveyance. The Marquis de Bouillé had advised his majesty to take with him the Marquis d'Agoult, major of his guards, an honest and loyal friend, who, being perfectly acquainted with the roads, might be of service in case of a surprise; but the king preferred the company of Madame de Tourzel. De Bouillé had everything arranged for a happy result. He sent Monsieur de Goguelat, one of his staff-officers, to inspect the road between Châlons and Montmédy; he removed any of the battalions who were at all disaffected, and retained only the most faithful; he brought a number of foreign troops of tried loyalty; he placed at Montmédy a battery of sixteen pieces of cannon, declaring publicly that all these movements were necessary in order to resist the attacks of the allies. He sent some squadrons of hussars to Dun and Varennes, dragoons to Clermont, and posted other relays along the route, under pretext of protecting the treasure of the army, which was to be brought to Paris.

“The king sent him a million of francs to supply the wants of the militia. The queen had already sent all her baggage into Brussels, addressed to her sister, the Archduchess Christine, who then governed Flanders. Her diamonds and jewels were confided to Leonard, her hair-dresser, who preceded her with the Marquis de Choiseul. Finally,



The king wrote to General de Bouillé that he would start on the 19th of June. The general ordered the Marquis de Choiseul to station the eighteen squadrons of hussars at Varennes, and to send thither his own horses to bring the royal carriages further on the way, sending word to the king of the exact place where he would be placed, so that the post-horses might be changed. The most salutary advice in case of danger was given; horses saddled with each relay ready to bear the couriers, who were to be sent on in advance to apprise the reinforcing squadrons, and to warn General de Bouillé to hasten forward with his battalions in case the royal family should be in danger. The general left Metz, making a feint of visiting the stations, and approached Montmédy. All the brave and faithful officers who commanded the squadrons were charged with rolls of louis d'or to encourage the soldiers in case of danger."

"Oh! how wonderfully well everything was arranged," cried Fedrigotti.

"I have not told you half the precautions taken, or I would never be done! Meanwhile, various plans had been devised at the court. Madame de Tourzel was to assume the disguise of the Baroness de Korff, one of the richest ladies of Frankfort—a city which had immense commercial transactions—and who consequently journeyed in great luxury. The passports were signed by the minister, Monsieur de Montmorin. The queen was to pass for the governess of the baroness' children under the name of Madame Rochet. Prin-

cess Elizabeth, the king's sister, was to be Mademoiselle Rosalie, young lady-in-waiting to the baroness. The king was a valet-de-chambre, and called himself simply Durand. The Dauphin, dressed like a little girl, was called Aglaé; his sister, Amélie. The officers of guard, Maldan and Dumontier, under the livery of servants, were called Jean and Meletior. Monsieur de Valory, disguised as a courier of the baron, was called François. De Fersen was to act as coachman from Paris to the barrier of Bondy, where they were to change for the travelling carriage."

"Poor sovereigns!" said Lida, "to what a pass they were reduced! But if they could only have been saved!"

"Alas! the very first day things began to go wrong. The king wrote to General de Bouillé, who had been at Longwy since the 15th, that, in order to allay the suspicions of a waiting-woman whom they distrusted, they would have to postpone their departure for twenty-four hours, until the 20th. Imagine the disorder, confusion, and disturbance that such a delay necessarily occasioned in an enterprise so well arranged. The general was obliged to countermand all his orders, and thus rendered the precautions useless. At last, as it pleased God, came the moment of departure. Paris seemed to be in a sort of stupor; an appalling silence reigned in the most populous streets. The National Assembly received message after message. On all sides it was whispered: 'The king is going to leave Paris; he will certainly escape

us!’ At the Tuileries all was tumult and anxiety. Lafayette had placed sentinels and patrols at all the exits, stairways, and corridors leading to the royal apartments, and even listened himself at the door, but no extraordinary bustle was heard. The king supped at the customary hour, and entered his sleeping-apartment as usual. The queen also retired, and the children were in bed. The king had double keys for the apartments formerly occupied by the Duke de Villequier. When the appointed hour arrived, both the queen and he donned their travelling dresses. Madame Brunyer dressed the Princess, and also put a dress on the half-sleeping Dauphin, who supposed they were disguising him to play a part in a piece.

“The angel protected the fugitives so far that they passed unobserved through the secret door of this ancient and uninhabited portion of the palace. The royal children were in the carriage with Madame de Tourzel, and Monsieur de Fersen, on the coachman’s seat, took the carriages through many windings along the streets of Paris, that every trace of them might be lost. At length he stopped on the Place de Carrousel. The queen and Madame Elizabeth had arrived there stealthily. The king had desired to remain till the last, and they were all to meet on the Rue de l’Echelle; but he unhappily went astray, and was somewhat late in rejoining the others, who were meanwhile in cruel suspense.

“At Bondy the whole party entered the two carriages. The time lost by the king threw new

obstacles in the way of De Bouillé's plans, and the difficulties were increased by a trifling accident. At Montmirail it was found that the carriage needed repairs, so they were obliged to wait nearly an hour till this had been done. Think what must have been the anguish of the king under such circumstances. An hour lost might cause their death. At length they resumed their journey, and at first everything seemed to go well. The day was mild and serene; the august persons breathed easily for the first time after two years of continual suspense. The energy and prudence of Monsieur de Valory, who watched for the various relays of post-horses, the thought that they were drawing rapidly near to the brave De Bouillé, and would soon be surrounded by a powerful army, made these royal hearts rejoice.

“Châlons was the most important city through which they had to pass, and the travellers arrived there about three in the afternoon. As usual, a number of curious loungers surrounded the carriages. The station-master recognized the king, and could scarcely repress all marks of astonishment and of respect. Sill, feigning perfect unconsciousness, he assisted the grooms and postilions, and hurried them away without any apparent design, and then, leaving Châlons, the king supposed they were safe.

“At the post-station of Pont-Sommevesle it had been agreed that the king was to be met by De Choiseul and De Goguelat with their squadrons of hussars, who were to escort him to the post-station

of Sainte-Menehould, and so on. But, alas! all these measures were rendered useless by the king's delay at Paris, and the subsequent ones at Bondy and Montmirail; and these delays put to naught all the precautions of human prudence, and were the cause of terrible disasters, of shame and bloodshed, to France, and horror to the whole of Europe. The brave officers, De Choiseu and De Goguelat, waited a considerable time for the arrival of the king. They sent scouts out upon the road to Châlons, who returned without having seen any one. They still waited. At last, seeing that no one came, they turned their horses towards Montmédy, scarcely half an hour before the king reached the station.

“On his part, the king, surprised at not meeting the promised escort, put his head out of the coach-window several times during the journey, in spite of the remonstrances of the queen and his sister Elizabeth, who reproached him for thus risking detection. Having reached Sainte-Menehould, and seeing neither troops nor officers, the king, becoming impatient, again appeared at the window of the carriage. This movement was his ruin. Young Drouet, the son of the station-master, who was a fiery Jacobin, recognized his face, which he had seen upon the five-franc pieces, and exclaimed:

“ ‘It is the king, who is escaping!’ ”

“These words flew from mouth to mouth; but the horses were ready and the postilions mounted, the Jacobin dared not oppose his departure, and the carriages resumed their journey.



“The officers of the dragoons, who were parading in the square, having seen the royal carriages arrive, mounted their horses to escort them; but Drouet having apprised a considerable number of the National Guard, they also mounted their horses, put guards at the exits, and prevented the dragoons from going to the assistance of the unfortunate monarchs. They tranquilly continued their way, unaware that Drouet was riding furiously towards Varennes to give the alarm. A troop of dragoons, seeing Drouet riding at full gallop, suspected his design, and set out in pursuit; but Drouet, who was better mounted, concealed himself in the woods, and thus escaped the soldiers, and, proceeding by cross-roads, reached Varennes.

“The Lords de Choiseul and de Goguelat with their suite had chosen secluded roads to avoid passing through Clermont; the way being therefore longer, the king reached Varennes before them. Then the difficulty reached its height. Choiseul, who was to inform them of the location of the horses which were to take the place of the post-horses, was not there. The body of dragoons stationed at Varennes, under pretext of escorting the treasure, was to receive De Choiseul's orders; the commander was not aware of the king's arrival. The carriages had come as far as the outskirts of Varennes, which was more a village than a city; the king, impatient for the arrival of the carriages, ordered the postilions to crack their whips, but all was still around them. Varennes is divided by a river, over which is thrown an old bridge guarded

by a Gothic tower; this they were obliged to pass. This passage is narrow and gloomy, and in former times had evidently served as an ambush for the tyrants of the Middle Ages to entrap the passers-by.

“ Seeing that no one approached, the two members of the royal guard dismounted and advanced along the road, knocking occasionally at some door to enquire about the horses. Sleepy heads appeared for a moment at the windows, and asked drowsily :

“ ‘ What horses ? We have seen no horses.’ ”

“ The people were right, for De Choiseul had placed the horses in a stable beyond the bridge, that they might be ready for any emergency ; hence, should some ill-intentioned persons seek to oppose the king’s departure, a small number of dragoons placed at the head of the bridge could easily protect the passage. Alarmed at this mysterious delay, the king and queen alighted from the carriages ; they knocked at several doors, and always received the same answer. Then they got into the carriages, and promising the postilions a tempting reward, induced them to continue the journey till they should meet with fresh horses. They journeyed slowly along the road, which seemed to be wrapped in profound repose ; a death like silence pervaded the high road and its surroundings. They had reached the sombre arch of the tower ; the front horses were stopped by a cart overturned in the middle of the road.

“ ‘ What is it ? What has occurred ? ’ cried the king.

“‘A cart which blocks our way,’ replied the postilions from their places on the horses’ backs.

“Scarcely were the words uttered when Drouet, followed by other armed men, sprang out, and seizing the horses’ heads, cried :

“‘Halt there ! halt ! These dogs must alight !’

“The guards drew out their pistols, but the king sprang out of the carriage and said aloud :

“‘Friends, what do you wish ? We are travellers. Do not, I beg of you, alarm my family ; our passports are perfectly correct.’

“‘No,’ cried the others ; ‘you must present yourselves to the syndic.’

“They forced the postilions to back the carriages, as they could not turn under the arch. The queen trembled and pressed her children to her breast. She put her head out of the carriage, with prayers and entreaties. But this was all in vain ; pity or courtesy entered not the breasts of these furious partisans, their only joy, their infernal delight, being in the agony of those who fell into their clutches.

“The Syndic of Varennes was a druggist named Sausse. The carriages stopped at his house, and he was compelled to open his store. Some of the ruffians ran to awaken the other Jacobins of the Garde Nationale. Drouet had already sent messengers to the surrounding villages to ask the assistance of their comrades ; the syndic’s house was soon surrounded by a crowd of malcontents. The king at first persisted in showing his passports ; but his portrait and that of the queen, which hung on the

walls of the house, most effectually gave him the lie. Then Louis XVI. took the syndic's hand most affectionately, and, turning to the others, said :

“ ‘ Yes ; I am your king, and I confide myself, with my wife, my sister, and my children, to your loyalty. You can save us ; in a few hours I will be in the midst of my army France and Europe will bless you ; the world will proclaim you the saviours of your king and father ! ’

“ These noble and tender words filled every one with astonishment, and awoke in them sentiments of respect and profound emotion. Tears of compassion were seen on many faces ; their hearts were deeply touched. The unexpected presence of the king, his kind and beseeching manner, his royal hand extended towards them and pressing one of their own, the beautiful and hapless queen kneeling at their feet, offering them her children, saying to them in a stifled voice : ‘ Save them ! they are yours ! ’—all this had won their hearts, and filled them with compassion, and the Jacobins were on the point of saying : ‘ Go, and may God be with you ! ’ But with this change of feeling came a fear of the other Jacobins ; they remained irresolute, and the time passed. The queen, who was seated between two bales of merchandise, seeing the wife of the syndic enter the room, turned to her affectionately and said, showing the Dauphin upon her knee :

“ ‘ Madame, you are a woman and a mother. A woman and a mother is in your hands ; save her,

and she will never forget you. To you I recommend a king, a husband who loves me. The queen of France will owe you more than her kingdom or her own life.'

"The woman looked at her husband, and replied coldly :

" 'Madame, one husband is as good as another,' and immediately went out."

Here d'Herbeville said in a tone of grief and emotion :

"It is useless to rend your hearts by an account of the agony and suspense of the royal family during that night. How could I describe the frenzy of the hapless Antoinette ; the admirable resignation of Louis ; the execrable ferocity of Drouet, who immediately despatched messengers to Paris ; the astonishment of Lafayette at the intelligence of the flight of the royal family ; the furious anger of the Jacobins ; the triumph of the National Assembly when they found that their victims had again fallen into their hands ? Three commissioners were sent to bring them back to Paris—La Tour-Maubourg, Barnave, and Pétion, who had the audacity to place himself in the same carriage with the king and queen, like a wolf among lambs.

"The journey lasted eight hours ; the National Guard on foot accompanied the carriages, which rode slowly amid the hisses, howls, threats, and insults of the people, unjustly embittered, angered, and infuriated against the good king, who had thus become the butt for the maledictions of his wicked



and unnatural subjects, whom he still continued to regard with a calm and majestic eye, as a chained lion surveys the surrounding multitude. Many generous and loyal hearts still beat for him amid that multitude. Many furtive tears flowed softly at sight of the pale and dejected queen, who still kept her child upon her knee. Many would have thrown themselves at their feet ; but one word of compassion, one sign of respect, would have been a crime against the offended majesty of the people. The Count de Dampierre, for bowing to the king, was killed upon the step of the carriage ; a venerable priest who simply attempted to approach him narrowly escaped death.

“ All rebellions are iniquitous ; but when impiety is added to treason the rebellion becomes so fiercely inhuman that its proceedings surpass the blood-thirsty cruelty of tigers, hyenas, or panthers. You have seen an instance of this in my own misfortunes. Merely for having said confidentially to a false friend : ‘ The king is innocent,’ my wife and children were murdered before my eyes ! And this is why it fills me with astonishment to see the German princes nourish in their breasts those vipers of *Illuminati*, the fundamental law of whose sect is hatred to God, to monarchs, to justice, to all civil authority and order, and who await with impatience the time and the hour when they may see them all in the mire, if not in a sea of blood. And what do Italian princes do ? Keep beside them the chiefs of the sect. Dine with them, go to the country with them, with them discuss the most

important affairs of state, and know not, or will not know, that these very men have agreed with the French Jacobins to overthrow all their thrones and make Italy a popular republic. And if they were even certain of saving their lives; but who can restrain the fury of the populace when it is let loose and abandoned to its ungovernable fury?"

Sad and pensive, d'Herberville ceased speaking; but the historian may well remark that the worthy Frenchman was correct in his statements. That lost hour of Louis XVI. led to his arrest at Varennes, his death, that of the queen and the Princess Elizabeth, all of whom perished at the guillotine by the sentence of rebels. Then followed, by the workings of those sectaries, their accomplices, the destruction of the German Empire; the princes exiled; the creation of new lords. Later we see Italy subdued, trampled under foot, robbed; her princes banished; her public and private property snatched from her; her temples sacked; her nobles ruined; her ancient dynasties destroyed; new republics, as absurd as they were ignoble, improvised, and then swept away like the foam upon the sea; Italy finally crushed under the foot of a conquering stranger, who despises her, and most justly, for having forged her own chains in a moment of intoxication.

God, in the eternal decrees of his power, restored her. And how did Italy prove her gratitude? Return him thanks? reanimate her faith? honor, as an obedient daughter, his spouse, the Church? No; she extended one hand to the secret societies,

her mortal enemies, while with the other she forged new and heavier chains, with which she was to be fettered in 1848 by the cowardly sectaries whose prisons and cells she opened. God restored to her her lawful and paternal Government. And how did she repay his clemency? Did she feel remorse for her ingratitude towards his infinite goodness who had multiplied the wonders of his mercy to save her from degradation? did she restore the liberty which, by her new laws, she had taken from the Church, her mother, the glory and honor of the Italian land? did she protect the Christian education of her children? in her universities did she destroy the evil germ of false doctrines? did she bring back the ancient science, the ancient wisdom? did she teach that what belongs to Cæsar must be rendered to Cæsar, and to God what belongs to God, and to the Church, his spouse, and the inheritor of his eternal power and his eternal rights? No; Italy laughs and remains indifferent. She mocks at the prophets of ill-omen, and, idle and cowardly, awaits the third revolution.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE FIRST MONTHS AT COURT.

THREE years have elapsed since the events related in the first pages of our story had transpired. The fury of the French Revolution, leaving still unquenched the terrible torch which consumed the choicest flowers of greatness and of glory in that noble and chivalrous realm, had communicated the destructive flame to the adjoining nations. Count d'Almavilla had been sent by Victor Amadeus III., King of Sardinia, as head of the special legation to various courts of Italy and Germany. The king, having watched the movements of Kellermann in his cruel passage through Savoy, and further seeing that he threatened the passages of Monte Ginevra and Varo, after the taking of Toulon, despatched a deputation to discover the secret sentiments and manifest intentions of those states which had most reason to fear a speedy invasion ; and on this mission the count departed for Milan, whence he was to proceed to Venice.

His departure left Virginia once more mistress of herself and head of the family ; and although her husband had considerably limited her in pecuniary matters—for, being a haughty and extrava-

gant man, he loved display—however, she willingly made these sacrifices for the sake of peace and to give Ubaldo and Irene the advantages of a good and religious education, which she considered of more solid worth than any wealth. And meanwhile Count Edward added two heavy crosses to her burden, which this delicate and sensitive soul found it most difficult to bear.

The first of these trials was his absurd and criminal passion for a certain Baroness Laffeld, a Swedish adventuress, who knew every language save the Swedish, and excused herself for this on the plea that she had left Sweden when a mere child and been brought up at the house of a Princess de Vilna, who taught her Russian and French. Her features were decidedly of Tartar cast. Some thought her a native of Ukrania, and others of Crimea; but however this might be, to the Count d'Almavilla she was a Swede, and the wife of a great general who had been high in favor with the king, and possessed of immense wealth, and more learned than all the Sapphos and the Corines. Many believed her to be what probably came nearer the truth—a young Livonian Jewess, who savored strongly of the Cabala and the Talmud.

The count rushed into such extravagant follies for the sake of this woman that his friends at first laughed at and then pitied him. But this crafty adventuress, as cunning as the spirit of evil himself, laid her nets so as to empty his coffers, besides being the cause of our hero fighting a number of duels and returning home frequently with his arm



in a sling, or with his face disfigured, all of which caused poor Virginia inexpressible grief and anguish.

Amongst other follies, the count, who believed her to be a great personage, a dignitary of the courts of Stockholm and Copenhagen, a lady of the Starry Cross and of the Polar Star, took it into his head to have her admitted to the balls and other entertainments of the Sardinian court. He made every effort to obtain the good offices of the grand chamberlain and of the master of ceremonies. He offered to take upon himself the responsibility of introducing the Baroness Laffeld, who was descended in a direct line from the Gotmanns of Scandinavia, the Landmanns of Sweden, the Hermanns of Denmark. Her origin was deeply interwoven with the divine alliances of Bleking, Smoland, and Malm; but the hidden branches of these primitive roots were to be found only in the very ancient volumes of the Edda-Semunt and Edda-Sonorr, which were lost in the gray mists of the frozen ocean, or in the dazzling brightness of the Northern Lights—things which might well have struck awe to the Sublime Porte or the celestial Chinese Empire; can we then imagine how it would affect the poor little court of Sardinia? The arms of the family of this most noble dame bore seven crests, twelve coronets, crowned with the diadems of Gothland, of Bothnia, and Kandaskaia—diadems which shone like the Great Polar Bear. Above these crests the heraldic crown is quartered, and in all sorts of devices, wherein were found everything

from the head of the mastodon to the little dormouse, the griffin of the polar reefs, who bore the hero Astolfo to the moon, and the eagle of the Loffoden Isles, who was frozen during nine months of the year, and the ogre of Mageroe, who had penetrated the utmost limit of the Arctic Circle. But, nevertheless, the great chamberlain and the master of ceremonies could not appreciate the crests and coronets and quarterings of the eagles, and ogres, and griffins, and constantly replied to the count's solicitations that the Swedish minister had not all these devices upon his coat-of-arms, nor in his golden book, nor even on his documents. The count consigned him to all the devils, and persisted in saying that the lady was noble, more than noble, of royal blood, and that her genealogy was to be found in the mysterious books of Edda. Perceiving that these gentlemen seemed to regard him with a slightly mocking air, and being persuaded that with them he could accomplish nothing, the count set himself to torment the good Virginia, that by her influence with the queen's ladies of honor she might obtain admission to the court circles for this other queen of the Northern constellations. And as Virginia, in spite of all her efforts, could not obtain for her the privilege of seating herself upon the footstools of shaded velvet of our Alpine Cassiopeias, the count became rough and harsh with his poor wife, and, by a refinement of cruelty, sought to torment her in every possible way.

All the duties of a *cavalier-servante* were so well

performed by the count that, according to the usage of the times, he became a champion of great repute. He paid his first morning call to the baroness, his noon and afternoon visits, the first and last in the evening. Virginia drove in her modest equipage, drawn by two bay horses of the good old race of Chivasso, driven by an old, staid coachman in full-bottomed wig, seated under an old-fashioned canopy of sky blue; behind the carriage two footmen with gorgeous livery, enlivened with gold braid and buttons; but neither lackeys nor outriders nor couriers. But the count, when he drove out the baroness, brought two superb English bays, with smooth, glossy skin, good height, and harness covered with plates and chains of gold, fastened with rings of precious stones, and a saddle-cloth of purple. These two fiery beasts were attached with ebony couplings, profusely gilded, and drew a high English phaeton, with rich silken cushions. A lackey who preceded the carriage wore a bonnet of scarlet, with a superb ostrich plume fastened by a gold ornament with the arms of the count engraved thereupon. His waistcoat was of a dazzling white, showing that underneath he wore an azure vest, with trimmings and sash of watered satin ribbon.

After driving through the fashionable promenade of Valentino and Rivoli, the count and his lady stopped under the arches of the Castello Square to partake of refreshments; then they dismounted and entered the shops and bazaars wherein were exhibited the latest Parisian fashions. Here my

lady took a fancy to one thing, there to another; now it was some Flanders lace, or a cut of velvet or brocade; again a little crape bonnet, or one of silk; these and other trifles, various odds and ends, so that the doubloons of Savoy were often expended to add lustre to the constellations of the North. Next came the stall at the theatre—a proscenium, of course—and delicious little suppers, to which were invited all the other signs of the zodiac, who often sat down to faro or basset, and thus brought forth the shining gold of Savoy, which usually fell into the purse of the celestial huntress, who knew how to deceive so gracefully while prating so sweetly of her planets. If the king had not thought fit to send d'Almavilla so opportunely to this legation, the Polar Star of Gothland would find the tail of her comet so beautifully cropped that she would have remained a tailless asteroid, or a nebulæ, scarcely visible to the great telescope of Herschel.

The second Egyptian plague which rankled in poor Virginia's heart was a new valet of the count, with whom his master was so infatuated that he allowed him to tyrannize over the whole household. This ruffian was a fierce and cruel Jacobin, who had been among the vile and obscene multitude who accompanied the gentle and unhappy Louis XVI. to the guillotine, hurling forth a thousand blasphemies and imprecations. And when the king, standing upon the scaffold, spoke to his people in words of love, of courage, and of magnanimity, this man was the first to snatch a drum

from the drummer's hands, and, beating upon it, drowned the accents of that last farewell which the good king addressed to his ungrateful children. This monster, whom even the populace cursed for his deadly hatred against the king, went to seek his fortune elsewhere, and always by evil means. He had been a servant in the first hotels of Paris; he knew all the tricks and intrigues and wickedness of this dangerous position, and had all its worst qualities.

He had gained the good-will of the count because he was quick and handy in all those offices which the toilet of a beau of the time demanded, and besides kept his master's apartments in admirable order, and with perfect neatness. But this man's greatest talent consisted in the art of flattery, and he could relate all the gossip of the ante-chamber. Through him he learned the intrigues of the court ladies and gentlemen, with additions and embellishments of every kind and sort, and the worst possible interpretations and notes, such as the most famous commentators have failed to supply to the scholiasts. The wretch knew all the whims and caprices of his master, and fanned the flame in favor of the baroness; always ready to carry notes on tiptoe, taking charge of commissions, little presents, gaining for himself a doubloon here and a sequin or a louis there. But the count did not perceive that his finest shirts, pieces of his Flanders point, his silver candelabras, or his jewelled trifles which he had laid aside had passed into the hands of the Jews. While his master



was at the play, this worthy man, decked out in the count's whitest linen, his finest vests of satin and velvet brocade, with diamond buckles and lace sleeves, went into various haunts of sin and iniquity, where he gave suppers and celebrated orgies with his comrades, at the expense of his master, who, being told of this by other faithful domestics, was seriously annoyed, drove them from his presence, and even from the house and from his service.

This was not, however, the Countess Virginia's greatest trouble. This fiend was the evil spirit of Lauretta, for whom he purchased the most detestable French and Italian books, which he procured Heaven knows where; he knew all the dens where vile emissaries of Satan secretly sell the most infamous books, and thus for a few shillings deliver souls to Satan; he found the very smallest editions, which could be readily concealed from her mother's watchful eyes. These books fostered her evil passions, as well as her unbelieving spirit. But his presence was still more dangerous to Ubaldo; for he being a boy, the wretch hesitated not to stop and address a few apparently careless but insidious words, as it were in passing, and his evil thoughts he clothed with such a Parisian grace that they seemed most pleasant and attractive, and Ubaldo readily listened to them. He also showed him certain rather coarse miniature groups representing shepherds reclining under pleasant shades, heroes sitting on the edges of fountains, lovers serenading with the lute or guitar, and other graceful but voluptuous figures, to excite his imagi-

nation. He always took care to give him a full explanation of everything, and related to him now and again various little romances, which Ubaldo in turn related to his sister Irene, who usually rebuked him severely, and to his mother, who invariably told him that while it was the duty of a gentleman to be gentle and courteous to his servants and inferiors, he should not make too free with them, nor in any respect allow them to be his confidants ; for that these people are usually coarse and ignorant, great babblers, and fond of slandering their masters ; that they are too often vicious, and while concealing their faults and evil habits from older and more experienced people, are in no respect particular with their young masters, and often fill their minds with much that is most dangerous to their conscience. Therefore Ubaldo, who was most obedient to his mother, carefully avoided all familiarity with the servants or with the valet.

At length God permitted that, when the wily Jacobin was about accompanying his master on his diplomatic mission, and had his trunks already packed to start, his journey came abruptly to an end, and he took up his quarters in a little corner of the Senate. For one day the Count d'Almavilla was dining with the Marquis de Ceva, and it chanced that he was placed next at table to the Marquis de Mombaldone. He perceived a beautiful gold snuff-box, exquisitely carved, which the latter had just placed beside him on the table. D'Almavilla took it in his hand and examined it, then, turning to Mombaldone, said :

“My friend, where did you get this snuff-box?”

“Do you like it?” replied the marquis. “I purchased it a few days ago, thinking it pretty and delicate in design. All this fine carving and tracery in relievo and the enamelled flowers I think exquisite and beautifully executed.”

“Singularly enough,” replied the count, “it is the *fac-simile* of one given me by the Prince de Condé when I was in Paris. I would almost have been ready to declare this was mine.”

“They are of Genoese workmanship,” observed Mombaldone.

D’Almavilla took a pinch of the fine Spanish snuff which it contained, and the conversation turned to something else.

On returning home, d’Almavilla opened a little coffer secured by two secret keys, and looked for the snuff-box; but it had taken wings and flown, no doubt to the Jews of Turin. What was his astonishment! He looked for several other valuables, only to find them missing and their cases empty. He immediately thought of the valet, who alone had entrance to that room, and he flew into such a rage that his first impulse was to take his pistol, and, pointing it at the valet’s breast, force him to confess the truth. But his anger subsided a little, and, composing his countenance, he wrote a few lines to the attorney-general, informing him of what had passed, and calling his valet, said:

“Firmin, take this letter and deliver it into the Baron San Mauro’s own hand, and wait for the

answer, which I must have before I take my afternoon drive.”

“Where does he live?” asked the valet.

“Where does he live? Well, that is good. He lives, of course, at the Senatc. Go, be quick about it, and return immediately.”

“Yes, your excellency.”

The letter was given to the attorney-general, who read it and said :

“All right; wait a few moments in the ante-chamber.” Then he rang the bell. An usher entered, and the baron said :

“Three bailiffs immediately.”

The bailiffs appeared, and calling in the valet, the baron said :

“Handcuff him and take him to a cell.”

“I? What! my lord baron. . . . You mistake me for some one else.”

As soon as the dishonest servant was under lock and key his trunks were searched, and in them found two rings belonging to the count, besides a watch, a pair of gold buckles, a quantity of shirts and silk stockings, which were to serve as the rascal's wedding outfit. This was all that was required to have him sent to the galleys, and set to turn the great wheels of the vessels which run to and fro from the port of Villafranca.

After the count's departure on the embassy for the king, the good Virginia took courage and hoped to regulate her house, with her ordinary success. The twins were already well advanced in piety, Ubaldo making progress in all the branches

of education necessary for him, and Irene in those suitable for a young lady of rank, while giving her attention to domestic duties. Clotilde and her little sister, as we have already said, had been taken under the protection of the countess, who placed Clotilde at the court as lady-of-honor to Maria Clotilda, Princess of Piedmont, and sister to the unfortunate Louis XVI. Antoinette, who was now in her seventeenth year, was regarded by the Countess Virginia as Irene's good angel and the joy and delight of the family ; for this young girl combined such nobility of soul with beauty of person that her hand had already been asked of Prince Charles Emanuel by many exalted personages, and in the year following her coming thither she was affianced to a great baron of the kingdom with truly royal magnificence. Lida had been chosen as companion to the Duchess de Chablais, sister of Charles Emanuel, Victor, and Charles Felix, who were successively kings of Sardinia, while Prince Benedict, or Benedetto, the youngest of the brothers, who was considered the handsomest and most charming prince in Europe, died at Sassari while still young.

Lida, who, as we have seen, was a good, discreet, and sensible girl, however, allowed herself to be dazzled during the first months of her stay at court by the splendor of royalty. Courts have, from their very nature, an almost indefinable something which attracts, fascinates, and, as it were, intoxicates, as the whirlwind in its dizzy round engulfs all that comes in its path, swallowing up everything in its fearful vortex. The new maid-



of honor could not help feeling a certain pride in seeing herself seated, evening after evening, in a gilded coach with great crystal windows, drawn by six horses, accompanied by lackeys in superb livery, while every one saluted the princesses as they passed, the courier on his magnificent charger returning to receive the orders of their Highnesses, which were usually transmitted through Lida. In the palace she inhabited an elegant apartment looking out upon the green alleys of the royal park, with its beautiful flowers, miniature lakes, and the countless other charms of this delightful spot. Leaving her apartment to proceed to that of the princess, she received the respectful salutations of the lackey and pages in their gorgeous liveries of scarlet and gold; had the waiting-women all under her orders; even gave the hour for Mass to the royal chaplain; was visited by the court ladies in magnificent toilets, who came to enquire the precise hour for the royal drive; sat at the royal tables in the castles of Veneria, Rivoli, Stupinigi; walked arm in arm with the princesses in their beautiful gardens, where all the pleasant familiarity of rural life was permitted; rode every day on a beautiful palfrey; in the evening took part in comedies or pantomimic representations of historical events, of rural scenes, or foreign customs, sometimes sumptuously attired as Zenobia, or Semiramis, or Artemisia, sometimes as a little shepherd, mountain girl, or fisher maiden; or she would represent the English in the American colonies, with their broad straw hats, or the richly-apparelled Spanish

creoles of Mexico or Peru, the Hollanders in the colonies of Java and Batavia, in their simple and primitive costume ; and all the while find herself the object of praise, applause, and adulation from the princes and great courtiers, which distracted her unsophisticated mind, and puffed it up with a sense of her importance, to the detriment of her natural frankness and simplicity of manner, as well as that delicate timidity which adds so much to the countenance of a Christian maiden, and, instead of lessening her charms, gives her such an irresistible attraction.

Lauretta, who in private life loved Lida as an inferior, since she had seen her at court universally admired and caressed, became jealous, and could no longer bear the sight of her ; but the Countess Virginia, who loved the young girl with that sincere and generous affection which desires the prosperity of its friends, was much rejoiced. Lida never visited her without receiving good advice. Perceiving that the air of the court had gone a little to her head, as a cold often does before settling on the chest, she tried to think of means by which this might be checked. Therefore one evening when Lida came as usual to see her, the countess, taking her hand, said, with a sweet and kindly smile :

“ My little Lida, I think you have become something of a worldling. I used to see you every fortnight at San Giovanni, paying a visit to our worthy Canon. You know we used to do like the doves— one go in as the other came out of the pigeon hole ; but you have become a ring-dove ! ”

“Yes, indeed, dear countess,” said Lida, blushing; “you are right. I have often let the fortnight pass, but you will see me there on the vigil of the Immaculate Conception, and henceforth I hope to kneel at the grating every fortnight as before.”

The Canon was a good, learned, and most charitable man, who, receiving large alms from the rich, used them all to the advantage of the poor. He was esteemed a remarkably just man, and was considered a master of experimental doctrine. He was confessor to the Duke d’Aosta, the Duke of Genoa, and the princess. In the confessional he consoled and comforted Lida, who was one of his penitents, with such sweet and holy words that the good young girl was deeply moved, and asked him if he could spare her an hour or two some day, when she might consult him as to the direction of her soul. He willingly consented, appointed a day, and she went thither. It was in the afternoon; she met him on the threshold of the door, where he had been giving a poor widow a pair of sheets for her sick child’s bed, and a note for the apothecary and one for the butcher, that she might procure him both food and medicine.

The Canon received Lida graciously, and brought her into his little parlor, which was a model of cleanliness. There she opened her heart to him, disclosing all her doubts, and explaining her new condition at the court. The good old man spoke to her with wisdom and firmness, but in consoling and reassuring words. He made her understand

how a soul can at the same time serve God and the world, by observing faithfully the duties and obligations of her state. He showed her a method of exactly dividing her time, tracing out a rule of conduct which gave her time to practice her religion and at the same time fulfil the duties of her position ; for these latter, he explained, must be scrupulously observed, for a person can live in no matter what position, and always find time to offer to God his heart and his thoughts, whether he be a soldier or a sailor, or a lawyer or a merchant, or no matter in what occupation or how much burdened with business. The Canon perceived that the young girl, dazzled by the brilliancy of the court, had permitted her heart to become filled up with vanity, and that pride would soon gain sufficient place to make her displeasing both to God and to the world. He therefore said kindly and benignantly :

“ My good Lida, you are still young ; but when one is gifted with a prudent and sensible mind, she should consider things from their real point of view. Courts, being the dwellings of kings and emperors, must necessarily be full of pomp and magnificence suitable to the dignity of sovereigns, because they are upon earth the representatives of God, and as the majesty of the throne is a ray of glory descending from on high, to show us the dignity and authority with which God surrounds the princes of earth, whom he has chosen from thousands to govern nations and preserve justice, order, and harmony. Saint Paul tells us that ‘ there is

no power but from God. Render ye, therefore, to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor'; for all this is by the will of God, the Supreme Master of his creatures, and for the fear and love which we owe him.

“Therefore you see, Lida, that if it does not think of God, it is easy for the soul, dazzled by the light of such splendor, to make of it an idol, and become thereby corrupted. Thus we see even Christian kings led astray by the homage which is offered them, sometimes believing themselves superior to every law, even those of the Church, our common mother; and therefore the Lord, it may be, permits that their subjects forget what is due to them. You have been placed at the court; do not let yourself be misled by its deceitful glitter, for your masters are only men, and your superiors solely by the authority given them by God. You who dwell in such close relation to kings and princes must see that when they meet in the bosom of their family they throw off the ceremony which they are outwardly obliged to observe. You have heard them amongst themselves call each other, not Charles Emanuel, but Carluccio; not Victor Emanuel, but Torio; not Charles Felix, but Felicetto. The Prince of Piedmont calls his wife not Maria Clotilda, but Tilda; the Duke d'Aosta, Gegia, in place of Maria Theresa, and so on. You have seen them joking and playing tricks on each other, as in any simple, middle-class family.



“The court, my child, is but a theatrical pageant. It is rich, splendid, magnificent; but its glow and glitter is merely evanescent, partaking of the transitory nature and fleeting glory of those who inhabit it. No one knows better than I what the reality of court life is.

“You know that our princes always rise early, and when in the months of December or January I go to the court to hear their confessions, it is usually before dawn. As I pass through the courtyard of the castle, the bitter, frosty wind chills me from head to foot. I find the grand entrance to the palace opened only enough to permit me to enter; the royal portico lit only by the feeble light of the dying embers from the fire; the great staircase almost as dark as night—scarcely in the dim light can I perceive the statues which ornament it; in the great hall of the Swiss Guards some half-spent, dying logs are falling in ashes through the great bronze andirons of the chimney-place. Here and there stretched upon the benches are some drowsy halberdiers, who doze for a moment, then start up, shake themselves, and yawn aloud, whilst the sentinels pace silently and languidly to and fro, with their heavy sabres upon their shoulders, the whole scene making me feel as though I had crossed the threshold of the world of sleep. The beautiful ante-chambers, which you always see filled with lackeys, arrayed in flaming scarlet and gold, have then only two or three on duty, and they half asleep around the fire-place. The parade-rooms are empty. In the first there are

some young men of the royal guard, wrapped in their white mantles, lying on sofas, with their great boots hanging down and their sabres clanking on the ground at the least movement, reminding one of the galley-s'aves with their ball and chain.

“I return two hours later to say Mass for the princesses, and perhaps give them communion. Then it is the time when King Victor Amadeus, the princes royal, the lords and ladies of the court, ambassadors, generals, and other superior officers of the garrison repair to the gallery of San Giovanni to hear Mass. O Lida ! what a difference from the scenes of a few hours before. The court has become a vast emporium of velvets, laces, jewels, trailing robes, mantles, crosses, stars, chains, and ribbons of knightly orders, making a curious blending of every shade more various than the colors of the rainbow. The great door is open wide ; the grenadiers, in faultless array, are under arms ; gorgeous carriages pass in and out of the courtyard or wait beneath the arches ; the neighing and hinning of horses are echoed under the vaulted ceilings and up the great s'airs.

“The hall of the Swiss Guards is no longer what it was in the dim light of the dawning. The sentinels are changed ; the halberdiers, with pikes and lances and cimeters, are ranged in columns to present arms to the great courtiers, to the knights of the Order of the Annunciation, to the ambassadors, generals, and ladies. In the ante-chamber to the throne-room are pages in purple, awaiting the order to attend the queen or princesses and

bear their trains. As soon as a person of the first rank enters the hall, the officer of the Swiss Guards strikes the ground with the end of his halberd, the royal guards in the second chamber lower the points of their sabres, the ushers throw open the doors, the officers of the garrison salute, raising their hand to their cap, and the great people enter the throne-room, bowing right and left, and receiving profound salutations on every side. Each one has his little gossip of the evening before to relate: at the Masimo's such and such a thing happened; at the Andeseno house such a thing was said; the Austrian ambassador was at the Barolo soir e; the minister from Holland was at the Alfieri house; the Count de la Tour had just returned from London, and the Count di Saluzzo from Lucerne. And what news from France? The worst possible!

“At last the clank of the halberdiers and their halberds is heard from the direction of the king's apartments, and the shuffling of lackeys' feet from those of the queen. The sentinels present arms, the doors are thrown open, and the lords and ladies range themselves in files. In the ante-chamber every one is on the alert. The king wears the uniform of general of the Guards, the queen a long train robe of azure velvet, held by two pages; the princesses appear, followed and surrounded by pages, and the long robes of the ladies-of-honor spread over and almost fill the apartment. The master of ceremonies walks behind the king, and the chaplain, in purple soutane and surplice,

carrying the missals under his arm, follows the queen. Then in a long procession come the ambassadors, ministers, knights of various orders, generals, and colonels. The royal family have long reached the chapel before the last of their attendants have passed through the Swiss hall.

“I tell you all this as a striking illustration of what a glittering, unreal delusion a court is. If there is anything solid about it, it is not what appears to the eye, but that which is hidden too deep for mortal gaze to penetrate. Regal authority, as I have told you, is a reflection of the majesty of God, the Creator and Lord of all things, who has thus deigned to exalt and dignify the persons of his representatives. This authority, consequently, is most great and holy, and should be honored and respected. If you consider princes as men of the same nature as other men, doubts will arise in your soul if obedience is really their due, for human pride frets and chafes under the burden of superiority; but if you regard them as the representatives of God, you see their heads encircled with the aureole which comes from God, and venerating Him you venerate them. Every day you see an instance of this in passing through the throne-room, with whose magnificent appointments you are familiar, as well as with the beauty of the paintings, sculptures, and carvings of the rich furniture of the chamber. You have often, I am sure, admired the elegance of the precious marbles, brilliant crystal chandeliers, immense mirrors, inlaid floors, and the

magnificence of the dais of crimson velvet, edged with gold fringe, which surmounts the throne, and all the sumptuous draperies and gold cords and tassels. You have observed that the throne is separated from the rest of the room by a heavily-carved balustrade, and its steps are covered with Flanders carpets, and your eyes involuntarily rest upon the glittering, golden seat, which with its back turned to the room, signifies that the king is absent.

“Tell me, do you call this chair with its back turned to the room a throne? No. It is only a seat turned to the wall, which inspires neither awe nor respect. But when, on days of great ceremony, the king receives the dignitaries of the kingdom, the chair is placed once more in its proper position, the king is seated upon it, and it has become a royal throne, to which you scarcely dare to raise your eyes, lest they should be dazzled by the majesty that it represents, because the monarch there receives the homage of his subjects. The king considered as an ordinary man is little more than the chair turned to the wall; but regarded under his true aspect, he is noble and great, because the rays of God’s glory are shed round the face and form of his representative.

“To-day, my dear Lida, these Voltairean philosophers, who have no God, and who speak incessantly of the rights of man, as if without God they could even conceive what these rights are, despise kings, because they only see in them men with a head, legs, and arms like themselves, and regard



them as a more or less perfect development of a monkey or a dog. In France we have seen how many calamities have been the result of these false and fatal doctrines—calamities which had their origin in the National Assembly. After having overthrown the ancient fundamental laws of that glorious kingdom, they attempted to found or form a new constitution on an English model. This constitution would make the king a merely passive witness of whatever the ministers chose to do in his name, without letting him have the slightest knowledge of it.

“ You know, Lida, that I was also the confessor of our deceased queen, who was embalmed and placed, according to the custom of the Sardinian sovereigns, on a gorgeous bed in the great hall of state, with multitudes of lighted tapers around her, and a throng of priests and religious chanting psalms. I saw the lady-of-honor, who kept watch with other court ladies, at the head of the coffin, completely veiled in black crape ornamented with gold. The queen was laid among satin draperies edged with gold lace, and was arrayed in a brocade robe, with jewels around her neck, and her crowned head resting on velvet cushions. The ladies who watched beside her never passed without making a deep reverence to her, as they arranged the crown or a fold of her robe, or the feet or hands of the dead. When dinner-hour arrived, the ladies-of-honor bowed profoundly, saying :

“ ‘ Your majesty, the ladies crave your permission to go and dine.’ ”

“ Night came ; the watchers were to be relieved ; the principal lady-of-honor approached, bowed again profoundly, and begged her majesty to permit the ladies to retire and others to take their place. This lasted for three days, after which the lady-of-honor advanced from the weeping group around the coffin, and kissing the hand of the deceased, said :

“ ‘ If your majesty permits, the undertakers will now enter to close the coffin, and convey you tomorrow with royal pomp to Superga, where you will be placed in the tomb of your august ancestors.’ ”

“ Do not laugh, Lida ; these ceremonies are very ancient, and had their origin in respect for a body which, when living, received the homage due to majesty sanctioned by God. I want to call your attention to these points as a contrast to the new constitution which the philosophers of our days have created in France, and attempted to found in Italy. Their object is to make the royal authority, as it were, a corpse, before which they speak or act in his name, leaving him powerless to oppose them, no matter how he may feel disposed, just as the ladies-of-honor did with the poor dead queen, asking permissions already given, and orders of which there was no need. Therefore, my child, honor your sovereigns loyally and staunchly, but do not let yourself be dazzled by the vanities of the court, amongst which you can love God, cultivate piety, modesty, and Christian humility, and thus equally please the Master of heaven and the princes of the earth.”



## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE SUMMER RETREAT.

THE July sun had extended its fiery dominion over the Val Dora, and the heat had become so intense that the lungs of the Turinese felt oppressed and as if half stifled. The various lords had taken their departure for their mountain villas, where they could breathe freely the pure fresh air of the valleys of Monte Viso, Lucerne, Viu, and Roccamclone. The Countess Virginia had inherited from her father a small and very ancient castle in the valley of Lanzo, which was surrounded by dense woods of elm and oak, situated at the foot of a very high rock, that formed for it in summer a most refreshing shade, while it was kept cool and fresh by springs of clear, blue water, whence five streams descended into the valley through clefts in the rock. The snow-covered crests of the mountains and the glaciers melting produced these crystal torrents. These springs descended through the clefts and fissures of the rocks in miniature cataracts, while its crystal drops lent to the mountain mists brilliant iris-tints, brightening and beautifying the dark and rugged rocks. Having reached

the base, they meandered over moss-covered stones, and formed little ponds, wherein, darting hither and thither, were myriads of little bright-hued gold and silver fishes. Blackbirds, nightingales, thrushes, and linnets came at evening to drink and bathe therein, while others far up the heights chanted their Vesper hymn and saluted the dying rays of the Western sun, which still rest brightly upon the highest peaks of the mountain.

The castle was situated on the side of the rock, and surrounded by the highest and steepest wall. Its towers were crenellated, its walls surrounded by court-yards, interspersed with breaches and gun-holes. It had numerous additions or wings, added in later times, while a moat, filled by the waters of mountain streams, bathed the foundations of the edifice. On the borders of the moat grew water-plants and the althea, with its white rose-petals. The entrance to the castle was by a draw-bridge between two towers, and when its masters sojourned here the bridge was raised and lowered by chains, and rendered the castle perfectly secure, though its situation was solitary and retired, surrounded by thick forests of elms, larches, and lindens, wherein evil-intentioned persons and bandits could so easily conceal themselves. The door opened into a long vaulted passage, which led under the arch of a little square court, on which gave out the narrow and pointed windows of the castle. In the centre of this court was a sort of well, which was a hundred fathoms deep, and kept the house supplied with pure cold water.

On the ground floor was the armory, on the walls of which were long lances, halberds, and javelins, such as were used by the rude men-at-arms of the fourteenth century. On the same floor were great halls, in which, on heavy and massive tables, were served the repasts given by the lord to his vassals after battle, and on which used to figure great quarters of beef, mutton, and whole pigs, fresh or salted. On its moss-covered and time-ravaged walls hung ancient helmets, cuirasses, coats of mail, formed of rings of steel, which rendered them impervious to blows; there hung surcoats of leather, with scales of copper, covered with verdigris; there were bucklers, spears, shields, rusty and worm-eaten; all of which proved that our good fathers loved not to change the arrangement of their dwellings.

The Countess Virginia retired to this ancient castle of the Val de Lanzo, where Ubaldo and Irene sported among the freshness of these woods, streams, and immense shades, under which they took long walks, and rejoiced in the view of these rural scenes, interspersed with hills and mountains, the calm silence of the spot, so well calculated to inspire chaste thoughts and noble affections, broken only by the morning song of the birds. Lauretta, on the contrary, was angry and dejected and ill-humored. She could not endure the solitude and retirement from the miserable pleasures of great cities, where all is noise, turmoil, and incessant and fatiguing excitement. She could not collect her wandering and distracted thoughts; she



could not enter into herself, speak to her own heart, and listen to her own conscience ; a dark, dreary void reigned in her soul. She eagerly sought the peace which always flew from her, a hope which shone an instant before her eyes and soon left her soul again plunged in a night of terror, dark, cold, and oppressive, as a weight upon her breast. The poor girl, unable to help herself, sought vainly around her.

What seemed hardest for her to bear was that, in the absence of her father, his talkative, vain, and infidel friends, who denied everything in religion as well as in politics, in public order as in legislation, no longer came to the castle. She was therefore deprived of the company of these unfortunate people, who, giddy and brainless as they are, cannot comprehend anything that is good or wise or noble or praiseworthy. They it was who secretly furnished Lauretta with those evil romances which she devoured with avidity, without letting her mother know. When they were starting for the country she concealed two of the latest publications in her trunk ; but the good Julia discovered them, and told the countess, who took them from her. Lauretta therefore had a fit of the sulks for over a week. Her life was passed in grumbling ; she was eaten up with idleness ; her heart and mind withered and dried up, like fruit in the oven.

She arose as late as possible. The morning was spent at her toilet, for she really enjoyed keeping the priest waiting at the altar and receiving every

morning messages from her mother, who desired her to hasten. She answered angrily :

“I am coming ; I will be ready in a minute. Let him go up to the altar ; I will be down in an instant.”

The minutes passed, and she usually came in after the Gospel, arranging on her way a curl or an ornament, or a ribbon or a pin. Having reached the chapel, where Ubaldo served Mass with devotion and Irene and Antoinette read and meditated, she entered with head erect and disdainful expression, biting her nails, or fingering her *prie-dieu*, or pulling the fringe of her shawl. She never even said a “Hail Mary,” and kept continually opening and shutting her book, turning the leaves, and usually holding it upside down, and coughing or sneezing in such a manner as to disturb the whole congregation.

After the divine Sacrifice, while Ubaldo was enjoying his privilege of folding the sacerdotal vestments, closing the missal, extinguishing the tapers, wiping the cruets, all of which he did like a good and experienced little sacristan ; while the countess was finishing her prayers, Irene reading a page or two of her “Imitation,” and Antoinette saying some prayers for her poor murdered parents, Lauretta left the chapel with as much haste as if the pavement burned her feet. Then she drew a long breath, snapped her fingers, and, leaning out of a window, called to the servants :

“Are we going to have any breakfast to-day ? Why on earth do people stay such an eternity in

that chapel? It is easy seen papa is away, and they are taking advantage of his absence."

Then, if some old servant ventured to say :

"Fie, miss; it is not nice to speak so of your mother. You ought to be glad that she prays for you."

"Who is speaking of mamma?" she would angrily exclaim. "I am talking in general. You are a fool, a meddler; don't bother me."

When breakfast time came, Antoinette and the twins came into the room chatting gaily with the countess; Lauretta, with outward respect, followed them, taking the last place after Ubaldo, so as not to find herself face to face with her mother. It was also a piece of petty malice, for when the butler served her first as the eldest daughter he was obliged to pass all the way round the table. The priest, who was also Ubaldo's preceptor, sat opposite her, and Lauretta, by way of arranging the flowers in the middle of the table, placed the vases before her, thus forming a sort of rampart between the priest and herself. Yet the Abbé Leardi was a man of much learning and varied information, kind and prudent with young people, of gay and cheerful disposition, a ready and graceful talker, and so desirous of winning Lauretta's good-will that he took every means of so doing, consulted her tastes, teaching her many things which were new to her in botany, natural history, or astronomy. But he was a priest, and that sufficed. She could neither endure him nor suffer herself to feel the slightest gratitude for his kindness towards her.

She took no part whatever in the domestic conversation ; but if she did chance to address a word or two to the abbé, she did so with a malicious smile, which seemed to say, “ Ah ! if I dared.”

And when, as it frequently happened, the conversation turned on the excesses of the French Revolution, and the priest made some very just remarks upon those most ferocious demagogues, whom God had already stricken with unprovided death—as Marat, who was slain by a young Girondine girl, or Robespierre and others, who had lost their heads under the blade of that guillotine to which they had condemned so many innocent people—Lauretta would suddenly take up the defence of these monsters.

“ Yes, yes,” she would say ; “ every one knows that in these social agitations, as in terrestrial cataclysms, mountains are swallowed up and abysses are raised to the surface ; where mountains were, there is the sea ; where seas were, there are the mountains. The same happens in popular revolutions ; some go up, others come down ; what is the good of one is the evil of others ; they govern who were once governed ; who once obeyed now command ; those who were judged now deal out justice to others ; the executioners are executed. Wherefore, reverend professor, I wish that priests, when they cannot judge properly of these things, would at least show a little charity, instead of hurling invectives at the leaders of the Revolution because, to confirm the liberty and equality of the people, they were obliged to behead some

poppies raised too high, which were of too bright a red, and flaunted and spread themselves too much in the public gaze."

Ubaldo, whose heart was noble and virtuous and full of the ardor of youth, glanced from his mother to his preceptor, and from him to Irene, and answered quickly :

"Lauretta, your charity is certainly of pure unalloyed gold. Do you not think so? You are so full of pity for Marat, Pétion, Danton, and Robespierre, whom you defend better than Malesherbes defended Louis XVI., that you have not a grain of compassion left for eight hundred thousand gentlemen, bishops, priests, religious, citizens of every degree, of all grades and conditions, who were beheaded, burned, flayed, thrown alive into the sea, or rivers, or marshes, or who died of hunger and misery in horrible prisons, in the holds of ships, at the cannon's mouth, by order of your Marats, Pétions, and Robespierres, in whose favor you have cited geological cataclysms. Well, they were swallowed up in their turn in the cataclysm they produced. As for priests, whom you pronounce wanting in judgment, I can only beg of you, my wise sister, to give them a peck of the sense and judgment which you have in overflowing measure, and have stored away in I know not what garret, since ours is empty."

"That is enough, Ubaldo," said the countess, interrupting him; "too much pepper blinds the eyes. Wounds are healed with balm, and not with salt or vinegar."



Thus did Lauretta often receive deep wounds ; but our little Voltairean had a tough skin. She scowled at Ubaldo and the rest of them till evening, and next day committed some new absurdity. Ubaldo, however, was always ready to dry his fruit in either wind or sun, but the countess was grieved to see the growing misunderstanding between brother and sister. We may, however, truthfully say that when Laure'ta did not touch on the delicate questions of religion or sound philosophy, Ubaldo loved his sister with real tenderness, and let not a day pass without giving her some marks of it, in the form of wildwood strawberries, fine fruits, or little baskets of hedge-berries, of which she was very fond. He caught beautiful butterflies to enrich her numerous collection ; he brought her charming little flowers, soft and velvety, for her herbarium ; he helped her to stuff birds which were peculiar to the neighboring woods and mountains. One day she evinced a lively desire to procure a white partridge from the glaciers, and Ubaldo at once promised such a tempting reward to some chamois hunters that they brought him one. Knowing that she particularly loved rare flowers, before leaving Turin, Ubaldo made a fine provision of roots, bulbs, seeds, germs, plants, and slips to sow or plant in the little garden of the castle. At no great distance was the convent of Camuldules. He begged the prior to kindly permit his gardener, who was a layman and a very skilful horticulturist, to come thither, knowing that the monks have also their little gardens beautifully arranged, and

full of beautiful flowers for the altar and for the small private chapels of their convent. Ubaldo and Irene, who had one heart in their love for their eldest sister, made every effort to gain her affection, in spite of her whims and caprices, as much as they could. Ubaldo, taught by the skilful gardener from the convent, had learned various means of adorning Laretta's flower-beds. He had sent to the city for the proper tools to trim and keep in order the hedges of wild laurel or box-wood which bordered the little paths ; he cultivated every species of flower, of every hue, whose variety of color and delicate beauty filled the soul with pleasing emotions.

To this little garden Ubaldo and his sister repaired every morning after breakfast. There, where Laretta found only a cold pleasure in the dry analysis of the beauties of nature, where she saw only the chance development of the vital elements which animate vegetation, without ever raising her regards to that God who by his creative power fertilizes the whole universe, who puts life into the germ, makes the grass grow, the leaf shoot forth, the petals open, the corolla develop, who gives fertilizing power to the stamens, pistils, corollas, and who forms the flower, gives it color, beauty, and perfume—there, on the contrary, the others enjoyed everything and conversed happily ; for they admired the works of that infinite wisdom with the gratitude which Christian philosophy renders to its God, who has deigned to create, to give life and growth and color to the little meadow and

hedge flowers, which blossom in the first rays of the sun and die at the approach of night.

The children afterward went up to their mother with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Ubaldo went to his studies with his professor, while Irene, Antoinette, and Laretta sat by the countess, busied with their tapestry, lace, or embroidery. Then it was evident how different character, education, and habits had made the two sisters. Irene conversed with Antoinette on pleasant and agreeable topics; following the bent of their charming and gentle disposition, their pure and candid souls, they spoke kindly and affectionately of their friends, discussed their little plans, their desires, their reading, always with piety, love, and gentleness. Irene asked the countess to permit her to teach Catechism every Sunday in the garden hall to the young mountaineers, for whom they often made dresses of blue or green calico, skirts of delaine or coarse stuffs, aprons with frills of colored calico, to take their fancy, as a prize for those who were quickest in learning the Mysteries or other portions of Christian doctrine. The countess approved of this design, and the two young girls went bravely to work to increase their wardrobe.

Laretta never took part in these pious works, saying that religion should not be the fruit of material interests, but a thing entirely spiritual.

“Yes,” said Irene, “I should be entirely of your opinion were we pure intelligences like the angels; but having a body and soul, we must equally provide for the wants of both, otherwise the

religion of the mind alone would find few proselytes. Certainly religion is not to be bought or sold for a dress or apron, but these little rewards will give pleasure to our little peasants, and make them more zealous and attentive."

"Well said!" exclaimed the countess. "There are many things in religion which regard the heart; there are others which concern the mind. Thus I would be far from offering a reward for approaching the tribunal of penance or going to communion; for if these acts do not proceed from the intimate and sincere conviction of the heart, they would be sheer hypocrisy, a simulation of piety, and, God guard us! fearful sacrileges. But to offer a premium to encourage children in learning their Catechism is merely a stimulant which incites young people to exercise their memory, and to vie with each other in learning well and quickly the principal duties of a Christian, and thus we give them an opportunity to avoid evil and escape the temptations of the enemy. These little mountaineers become good themselves, and when they grow up and marry they make their husbands and children also good. Therefore when Lauretta tells us that religion is not for sale, she is quite right; but if she declares that rewards given to the best scholar at Catechism is a traffic of holy things, she is wrong."

"Oh! of course," said Lauretta angrily. "I am the fool of the house; it is understood that I am wrong. Here one cannot venture to open her mouth; everything is at cross purposes, everything

taken in bad part. You must have fortune on your side—be a Benjamin, a pet, a spoiled child—then you can utter any nonsense or stupidity that you wish, and are always taken for a Solomon. Well,” she concluded, biting her handkerchief, “I think it a thousand years till I get away. I trust an offer will come to break the chain before long. If it is an ape who makes it, I shall accept him, and marry him at once to escape the presence of those who hate me.”

No one answered this sally; a deep silence reigned in the room; the mother looked silently at the poor girl, and a furtive tear dropped upon her work. She prayed from the depth of her heart that God might take pity on the unhappy child, whose evil education had perverted her nature and spoiled her disposition, without, perhaps, corrupting her heart. Laretta, even when she was most tranquil, had no great respect for her mother, whom she had always seen despised and ill-treated by her father. Not loving her, she did everything through fear, as a chained dog inwardly chafes under the restraint. Thus did Laretta become silent and then sullenly leave the room.

Full of vanity, deceit, a slave to human respect, when at Turin some friends would come to visit her mother, Laretta assumed a pleasant, smiling aspect, conversed with the greatest courtesy, and with apparent pleasure, while her heart was full of venom and her brain of bitter thoughts against her mother and sister. While conversing she constantly looked in the great mirror which hung over



the mantelpiece, with a rapid, satisfied glance at her own beauty, generally putting some touches to her hair; but if the glass also mirrored Irene's gentle face, in her hateful soul she pronounced a silent imprecation against her.

Sometimes when she was in her mother's work-room she became absorbed in some dark and gloomy thoughts, or, creating an ideal young officer, she fancied that she loved him. Then she developed a whole romance. There were duels; she gave a sword to her champion; she animated him with a glance; he fell wounded; she wiped away the blood with her handkerchief; she stanch'd his wounds. Here followed long sentimental discourses, ending in a solemn promise to die with him; if she could not die with him, she would live to weep for him, wandering at night round his tomb, to water with her tears the cypress which drooped over his tomb, under the shadow of which she saw his solitary shade sighing tenderly around her, or imitating in a feeble and plaintive voice the sweet song of the gentle nightingale, who weeps at the mysterious hour of midnight the death of his companion and the loss of his children. Sometimes she saw herself surrounded by a troop of bandits, dragged into solitude, to the midst of forests, to the depths of frightful caverns. Her lover exposes himself for her sake to a thousand dangers; she dreams of flight, of snares, of perils, of hopes. These follies were the daily nourishment of Laretta's mind, who, finding no consolation in prayer nor in the sweetness of domestic life, which are the fruits of

interior peace, of pure affection, of gentleness of heart, of all that embellishes the least act of daily existence, was always in bad humor, cold, disdainful, tired of herself and insupportable to every one.

She did not love Antoinette, because the graceful and ingenuous virtues of that hapless but noble young girl did not agree with her morbid and embittered character. Still, when she was alone with her, she poured out to her all her wrongs, and the injustice which she attributed to her mother because of her partialty for Irene. She spoke of Ubaldo's unfriendliness, the impertinence of the abbé, the ill-will of the servants, and the insolence of the waiting-maids. All these things she told Antoinette, tossing her head, stamping her feet, and snuffling with indignation, like fish-women telling their grievances. Not content with these fooleries, which she persisted in throwing at Antoinette's head, and to which the latter listened affectionately, seeking in her own mind to palliate her wicked conduct, she had scarcely left Antoinette than, meeting no matter what servant or lackey or kitchen-wench, she began her complaints, her grievances against her mother, sister, brother, and even Antoinette, who treated her, as she said, and oppressed her like a slave. These cowardly flatterers encouraged her, saying :

“ Indeed, miss, if I were in your place, I would do—I would say—we should see—you are too good—you ought to just hold up your head—stand up for your rights. You see you are too gentle and

patient. Patience is good for monks, but for you it does not do."

Leaving her, these wretches laughed at her and turned her into ridicule with the other servants.

Ubaldo and Irene, on the contrary, were always gay, cheerful, and amiable to every one. It was really delightful to see them. They were amused at the least thing; everything was a pleasure to them; they enjoyed the innocent rural sports and pastimes. But they also performed their exercises of piety with the greatest diligence, and fulfilled every little duty. They listened to and obeyed their mother's commands, and stimulated each other to virtue. Ubaldo admired Irene's gentle, kind, reserved face, so frank and sweet. Her presence suggested grace and dignity, and inspired respect and confidence. When sometimes the young man allowed himself to be led away by the force of his character, the vivacity of his disposition, and said something unseemly or unbecoming, Irene reproved him gently but firmly, looking at him reproachfully, till he repented. It is indeed a blessing to have a brother or sister who praises or blames us according to our deserts. An admonition coming from the heart, and made with a kindly countenance, often does more than a hundred sermons made rod in hand.



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE VISITOR.

WHILE the Countess Virginia dwelt thus tranquilly in this solitary castle of the Val Lanzo in peace of conscience, in the practice of the most beautiful virtues of a Christian mother, consoled and rendered happy by her beloved twins, the famous Count Cagliostro dragged out his life in despair. We have already related the tricks, artifices, and perfidious machinations by which he introduced and propagated in Italy the execrable mysteries of Masonry and Illuminatism. We have obtained most of our information from accounts of his trial at Rome, where, convicted of numerous crimes against the offended lese-majesty, human and divine, he was condemned to the block, but his sentence was commuted by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., to imprisonment for life in the fortress of San Leo, which stood upon a rugged slope of the Apennines of Montefellio. Here in the dreary silence of these ancient walls pined Cagliostro, sequestered from all intercourse with the world, and deprived of all means by which to deceive or mislead it further. Those who would care to make a melancholy jest, upon the miserable fate

of this impostor, might apply to him the verses of Alessandro Manzoni upon Napoleon at St. Helena, and depict Cagliostro from this rocky height gazing out over the landscape sad and thoughtful,

“ His arms crossed upon his breast,” \*

while the last rays of the sun gilded the furthest peaks of the surrounding Apennines, and of him say that—

“ He stands, and of the days that were  
The memory assails him,” †

and, marvelling himself at his almost incredible craft and cunning, by which he had deceived the world, recalled—

“ The imperious command,  
The prompt obedience.” ‡

However, seriously speaking, the wretch, in all probability, thought of tenor of means of escape from his cage, measuring with his eye the height of the rocks, the depth of the moat, and the thickness of the walls, mentally calculating his chances of climbing by the crevices in the wall. It is even related that he attempted the perilous leap, but, falling into the ditch, broke an arm and his left leg, which the surgeon set for him. Another time the knave pulled out his hair, and with wonderful patience made himself a false beard. When this was finished he sent for a Capuchin monk to hear his

\* “ Le Braccia al sen conserte.”

† “ Stette e dei di che furono  
L'assalse il souvenir.”

‡ “ Il concitato imperio,  
E il celere obbedir.”



confession. The religious came, and Cagliostro, hoping to conceal himself under the cloak and cowl of St. Francis, when he found himself alone with the Capuchin, seized him by the neck and attempted to strangle him, that he might array himself in his garments; but the brother, who had much more muscle than the wretch could have imagined, gave him a violent blow, shook him off, and, having thrown him on the floor, returned quietly to his convent.

Every means of escape from his narrow prison having failed him, Cagliostro fell into such a state of melancholy that about the end of August, 1793, he was stricken with apoplexy, which soon carried him off. Dean Marini, with exceeding zeal and charity, hastened to him, seeking by every means in his power to bring him to repentance for his crimes, and to effect his reconciliation with God and the Church. For him he had public prayers offered up by his congregation, that this soul, grown callous by habits of sin, might be touched with grace. But all was useless. The priest, Father Filippo Nalici, who at the time we write is eighty-nine years of age, and who had himself assisted at the death-bed of Cagliostro, used every means—the gentlest, and those which were usually the most efficacious—to soften this heart of stone and lead it to repentance.

“Frequently during his last moments,” writes the priest, “I took him by the hand, and besought him to press mine in token of compunction, but he refused to do so.”

Wherefore we must fear that, despairing of the divine mercy, he gave his miserable soul into the hands of Satan on the 26th of August. He was buried like an animal, at the foot of the fortress walls between the two watch-towers, and here they remained, as we learn from the same Father Filippo, till the year 1797, when his bones were disinterred by the Republicans, who divided them among themselves as if they were relics. In their abominable orgies they filled Cagliostro's skull with wine, and raised it to their lips so frequently that they became intoxicated and uttered the most fearful blasphemies against God.

We have purposely contrasted the two castles of Lanzo and San Leo to show Italian youth the light and shadow in human affairs, and the moral to be therefrom deduced, which is not always so clearly manifested in the development of abstract doctrines on the vices and virtues which, under infinite forms, attract the heart of inexperienced youth. History, which is the mistress of life, teaches better than philosophy, or rather confirms philosophical theories with practical examples. But to return to the peaceful retirement of Virginia's castle.

The Countess Virginia, although her castle was, as we have said, in a rather isolated situation, did not, however, lead such a secluded life that she did not visit some of her friends who dwelt in castles at no great distance from her own, and was visited in return with great pleasure on the part of her friends, by whom she was very generally loved for

her virtues, as well as for her gracious and gentle manner. A marchioness who dwelt in a pretty little castle near by was a frequent visitor at her house. This young matron had two fine little boys, and a girl of seven years old who was the eldest, and was a most charming and graceful little creature. The marchioness always brought her work, which was generally some fine lace for the altar-cloths that she made for the altar of her parish church; then they had long conversations, in which the countess usually gave her good counsel for the management of her family.

One morning the conversation turned on the education of children. The marchioness was a very good soul, but one who took part in all the gayeties of the court, gave magnificent banquets and frequent entertainments, went often to the theatre, and, in her constant intercourse with the world and worldlings, had become imbued with some French novelties, which had come into Italy under the mantle of philosophy, and were tinctured with the sophistries of Voltaire and Rousseau. So on this particular day she said, addressing the countess:

“Does it strike you, my dear friend, as it does me, that we are more clear-sighted than our ancestors in the matter of education? They educated their children with too much severity and too great regard for ceremony. I remember that when I dared to raise my eyes towards my father, he seemed to me something so high that it required a great effort on my part even to see him. Now

our children throw their arms round our necks, kiss us, play with us. This is as it should be; for then they act by nature and not by art, using the familiar *thou*, and not *your lordship*, who seems to them an unfamiliar being. This form of expression reminds us of the old Latins, of the days of Italian heroism, and of the ancient greatness."

"Ah! little Agatha, you are this morning a very Veturia or Cornelia, a Roman mother of the Coriolani and the Gracchi," said Virginia, smiling. "Bravo! I am only a plain housewife, inured to the spindle and distaff. I am foolish enough to desire that my children should treat me with the honor and respect which God and nature accord me. I love them very much, but I embrace them only as a reward for some good action, some victory gained over their little passions; when they obey promptly, or when they frankly confess a fault, they kiss my hand. The slightest caress on my part gives them pleasure and brings a smile to their faces. It is not natural that children should be on the same level with their father and mother, whatever these wooden-headed philosophers may say. Their reasoning is false; for they might as well liken the effect to the cause, the branch to the tree, the seed to the fruit, the bud to the flower. Did not the Lord say, 'Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land'? and it is scarcely likely that God, who is the author of nature, requires Voltaire and Rousseau to give him lessons on the duties of children to their parents. God never said that children

were the friends of their parents, but he has, indeed, said that they are their inferiors and respectful dependants. And consider yourself, dear Agatha, if it would be prudent to educate children without reverence, or to permit them the liberty and familiarity of friends. If your philosophers succeed in destroying paternal authority, which is the most natural of all authority, that of princes, magistrates, or laws will no longer exist, or will be useless to restrain the ungovernable license of men."

"As you will, countess; but as you seem so desirous of preaching nature, tell me why our fathers held aloof from us, never permitting us to spend the evening with them, nor sit at the table with them. Is this not unnatural? Are our children our vassals or servants? I remember well how I took my meals in childhood: sitting, with napkin round my neck, at the nurse's table, where I sometimes received a portion of some delicacy sent by my grandmother, my father, or my mother, as a reward for having knitted six rows of my stocking, or for having been good at chapel. The butler came in on these occasions with the dainty upon a silver platter, and placed it before me as ceremoniously as if it were a delicacy from the table of the Great Pasha."

"I believe," said Virginia, "that our elders knew better how to govern their families than we do now. Look at my children, for instance. You are a friend, and are prudent and discreet, and I may speak to you confidentially. Edward desired that Lauretta should be in all respects educated



according to the principles of the Encyclopedists. He wished to have a friend in place of a daughter ; he never permitted her to kiss his hand ; he embraced her, and permitted her to embrace him till she was quite grown. She always addressed him by the most familiar form of expression ; called him Edward, her friend ; said to him, ‘ I will ’—‘ Do that ’—‘ You are a fool,’ and even so far forgot herself as to say, ‘ You are a liar ; you promised and did not keep your promise.’ At table from her earliest childhood she cried out, sometimes in a fury, for whatever she wished. ‘ I do not want any soup ; I do not like it. My dear friend, give me another bird. Cut that pie and give me some ; I like it.’

“ ‘ Wait, my pretty little dear,’ he would reply ; ‘ your turn will come.’ ”

“ ‘ I will not wait ; I want it now.’ ”

“ Then she pinched his arm, pricked his hand with the prongs of her fork, pulled his hair, cried, beat the table with her fists, and even broke her plate and spilled her glass.”

“ But that was downright impertinence,” said the marchioness.

“ True, but the child was right enough. If she were Edward’s friend, she had the right to ask for this and that ; but if he really wished to show himself her father, as he should have done, he would have given her a severe reprimand, or even a box on the ear, and sent her from the table, to punish her for her gluttony, that she might then learn to subdue her appetites.”

“Oh! no; no blows, no blows,” said the marchioness. “Dogs should be beaten, but not children. I would not permit that. Our fathers had that practice, but their times were times of torture.”

“Why do you speak of torture, my dear little marchioness? Believe me, when children fly into a rage or tell falsehoods, a little manual correction will make them as gentle as lambs. But even their show of temper, their whims and caprices, are not the greatest evils to be feared. By admitting them to the table they hear conversations which too often take place when the guests become heated by wine and good cheer—calumnies, raileries, all sorts of ill-natured remarks, and many things which make an impression on the minds of children, who often remember them afterwards in the appropriate time and place; and these things, taking root in their hearts, demoralize them. Besides, when we consider conversations somewhat too free—accounts of opera, theatre, ballet, discussions on various wicked or foolish affairs—we perceive that it is a dangerous school for children.”

“Oh! how absurd such fears are,” said the marchioness. “Children, both boys and girls, are looking about them, and neither pay attention to nor understand these things; to them they are like Greek, Turkish, or Arabic.”

“My dear little Agatha, it is easy to see you are still young, for you do not seem to know that children come into the world professors of such Greek, Turkish, and Arabic. They seem, indeed, to be occupied with a fly or a butterfly that darts hither

and thither round the room ; but their minds are on the alert, and not a single remark falls to the ground. They seize them on the wing, arrange them in their little heads, turn them over and over in their minds. Then when they grow up we are full of grief and astonishment. ‘Who could have said such a thing? Where did they learn that? When and how did they hear it?’ What a heart-break for a poor mother! We forget that these are too often recollections of early childhood which have borne their proper fruit.”

“What is to be done, then? According to your view of the matter, children should not be at the table, should not be with us in the evening, should not be brought with us to pay visits. In that case, at what hour of the day or night would we see our children?”

“My dear friend, I will tell you. A mother who comes in late from ball or theatre, and who turns night into day, retiring at dawn and not rising until some time after noon, can certainly see very little of her children, unless at the table. But a wise mother will spend her whole morning among them. She will want to see her children as soon as they rise, make them say their morning prayers, dress them herself, teach them their Catechism, assist at their lessons from their various professors, as, for instance, their dancing, singing, or piano lessons; will watch over them herself, instead of confiding the care of so doing to others. She will pay attention to the carriage or deportment of her daughters; see that their manner of

speech be gracious ; that they do not become capricious ; that their minds be properly balanced ; that they be not discouraged nor cast down for the most trivial causes, but learn to endure patiently their little trifling pains or sorrows ; that they do not become proud, disdainful, or impertinent, but grow up frank, kind, simple, and generous ; she should ridicule their childish fears—as, for instance, when a door is slammed by the wind, a chair creaks, a spider, mouse, or lizard runs across the garden, or when there is a thunder-storm.”

“ But, my dear Virginia, I have a terrible fear of thunder myself. During a storm I tremble, I close all the windows, stuff my ears, and call Gigio to keep me company. Of course you are right, but who could help being frightened at thunder ?”

“ You see that is simply because in your childhood your nurses made you afraid of it. I attribute my courage in that respect to a jest of my nurse, who whenever it thundered used to say to me:

“ ‘ Listen, my little dear ; the angels are riding through heaven in their carriage.’

“ And when I said : ‘ Why do they make such a noise ?’ she would answer :

“ ‘ The noise is made by their golden wheels, and their silken whips cutting the air, the neighing of their winged steeds, the noise of their horses’ iron shoes. Listen, listen, Ina, my pet ! Hear that noise !’

“ And this strange impression became so strong in my childish mind that, in consequence thereof, I have never been afraid of thunder.”

“You are very fortunate; but I do not like children to receive such false impressions of things.”

“Then you would put them through a course of meteorology? You would tell them that lightning is an electric fluid which, from the midst of a positive, endeavors to establish its equilibrium by rushing into a negative, cloud, and that in the impetuosity of its course the fluid rends the ambient air asunder, the clouds meet with a loud crash and produce prolonged and repeated undulating sounds. But do you know the tales which really make children timid and fearful? The ridiculous nonsense they hear about magicians, sorcerers, witches, ghosts, and hobgoblins, which terrifies their tender hearts, fills them with phantoms, so that the child dares not remain alone at night in the dark, nor go from one room to another.”

“But it seems to me the fear of saints and their apparitions must be equally injurious.”

“You are mistaken, my friend. The saints, in the Catholic conception of them, never terrify children, who love and venerate them as beautiful spirits, luminous and holy. I remember well how, during the Novena to St. Lucy, mamma used to say to us :

“‘My dear children, you must be very good if you want St. Lucy to bring you pretty presents. You know she will give naughty children nothing but coal or sand.’

“Then we were as quiet as mice; never were better children seen. We knelt and said our



prayers with the greatest attention, no matter how long they might be; we learned our Catechism word for word; we performed our allotted share of work and study so perfectly that every one was delighted. Our nurses had peace, mamma's little dog was let alone, we no longer made fun of the old footman; in a word, the whole house was astonished at our good conduct. \*

“The vigil of the feast came. We prepared the dish of bran and salt, which we placed outside the window, so that St. Lucy's little donkey, which brought the presents in baskets, might have some food. That night we went to bed in perfect silence, but we strained our ears to hear the tinkle of the little silver bell which the donkey wore around his neck.

“‘There, listen! the saint has come. Oh! what lovely things she will bring us.’

“In the morning the nurse came in.

“‘Get up; quick, quick!’

“‘Nena, did St. Lucy come last night?’

“‘First make the sign of the cross. That's right; now say your “Our Father.”’

“And we obeyed.

“‘But did she come?’

“‘Yes. Oh! but she is rich and beautiful.’

“Then you can imagine how our hearts beat. We were ready in an instant, washed, dressed, and our hair combed, and in we ran to our parents.

\* In Verona presents are given to children at the Feast of St. Lucy, in the Tyrol at that of St. Nicholas, in Rome and Florence at the Epiphany, which is there called *Befana*.

“ ‘Good-morning! Papa, your blessing, please!’

“The windows were thrown open. What a sight! what cries! what loud and prolonged oh’s! and papa’s voice crying, ‘Do not touch anything!’

“Just picture to yourself, dear friend, a large table in the middle of the room, covered with a snow-white cloth, ornamented with a vase of flowers, and the whole divided into three compartments—for there were three of us, two sisters and a brother; the other two died in early youth. In each compartment there were beautiful toys, little figures, houses, articles for kitchen use, bed-room furniture, or tea-sets, all of the smallest description. In my brother’s compartment there were a drum, a little gun, a trumpet, a little soutane and surplice. In ours were dolls dressed as shepherdesses, ladies, flower-girls, besides little shawls, ribbons, velvet dresses embroidered in gold; then for one of us the dress of a Sister of St. Scholastica, and for the other a little Carmelite habit, so that we dressed up like little nuns, and Righetto, my brother, as a priest, and sang in chorus before our little altar.”

“But these are all superstitions, Virginia; for my part, I tell my children things just as they are, simply and naturally. No, no! why speak of St. Lucy in such a connection? I say to them: ‘Do not mind your nurses; I buy these toys and give them to you.’”

“You are too philosophic, my dear friend. Do not believe, for really it is not the case, that you tell your children everything simply and

naturally, as you say. You must deceive them in many things, about which you give them false ideas. The wisdom of our ancestors understood human nature better than we do. What absurdities in place of these innocent delusions do not your infidel philosophers teach their children! I certainly think that it is a thousand times better for them to believe in gifts from St. Lucy, or in other things of the sort, than in the doctrines that pleasure is the only guide to the will; that there should be no restraint on human liberty; that virtue which does not advance our own interest is not to be practised; that God never forbade any natural inclination, and a hundred other errors and falsehoods which are continually propagated in the works of modern innovators. The sweet and holy innocence of early Catholic education renders children dear to God and to man. Innocence and simplicity of heart is most lovable; but to wish to teach children, as the devil taught Eve, the universal science of good and evil before their time, is to vitiate their tender hearts and minds, to deprive them of their fairest ornament, of that heavenly robe of innocence which makes them as beautiful as the angels of God."\*

After this conversation, when Ubaldo and the three young girls returned from their walk, the young marchioness was quite surprised to perceive

\* This inundation of heterodox and pagan classics which has flooded Italy is one of the greatest calamities for the new generation. Montanelli tells us certain truths concerning the three celebrated Tuscan classics which should open the eyes of many fathers and mothers, as well as of teachers.

the respect shown by the twins and Antoinette towards the countess, as well as their pleasing frankness of manner and deportment. On the other hand she saw Lauretta, who, after saying a few words in a haughty, ungracious manner, remained perfectly silent. The young people gaily described all the various incidents of their walk; they said that they had met such a nice priest, who was riding up to the church of San Ignazio di Lanzo, to have rooms prepared for a score of young ecclesiastics who desired to make a retreat; that he had invited them to go up there the following Monday, where he would show them beautiful things, and where they should have an excellent view of the country, would enjoy excellent air, the beauty of the forests, and particularly the magnificence of the temple, which rises grand and majestic on the highest peak of the rocks.

The countess replied that if Monday was fine she would willingly allow them to go up to the sanctuary. It grew late; the marchioness took leave and returned to her villa, while Ubaldo and the young girls were delighted with their mother's promise. It chanced that a canon from Lanzo dined that evening at the castle. As soon as he arrived, the children ran to ask him why the mountaineers of that country had erected such a beautiful church to St. Ignatius Loyola on such a steep rock. The good canon, who was as affable as he was learned, proceeded to explain as follows:

“You must know, my good children, that on these high Alps there are valleys and fine pasture-

lands ; forests wherein there are large straw-thatched cabins, in which these rude mountaineers and their families dwell all the year round, having flocks of sheep and goats, that browse among the rocks, and from which they obtain wool, and also milk, of which they make little cheeses and *ricottine*, to be sold at the market of Lanzo. In 1626 the wolves became so numerous among the rocks that they were a terror to the country. Driven from the heights by the snow, they came down in packs to the valleys of Ghisola, Tortore, Mezzenile, making short work of whatever came in their way. The sturdy guardians of cows and sheep and goats began a war of extermination upon them ; but the faster they killed them, the faster these furious and ravenous beasts seemed to appear, robbing the sheep-folds, and even threatening the cabins, around which they wandered during the night, howling fiercely, to the great terror of the inmates. The hungry ferocity and boldness of these fierce beasts went so far that they seized children and carried them off to devour in the forest.

“ The poor mountaineers, having exhausted all human means of defence, had recourse to the intercession of St. Ignatius, who was much venerated in the parish church of Mezzenile in a chapel erected under his invocation. Novenas were made there. Walking in procession, carrying large, heavy crosses, down the steep, precipitous heights, came thither the good mountaineers, barefoot, fasting, and singing hymns and psalms ; then they



promised, if they were delivered from this plague, to erect, in honor of the saint, a church upon the summit of the mountain which could be seen in all the infested valleys. Whilst these good people were thus praying to God with hope and confidence, an enormous wolf suddenly rushed into a hut where five or six children had been left, and seizing one of them by the neck, fled with it into the woods. At the cries of the other children their mother, who was working in an adjoining field, ran thither to ask what had happened, and rushed out in despair to seek for her unhappy child, and, if possible, to save him from such a dreadful death; but her perilous course over briars, and thorns, and brambles did not seem to bring her any nearer to the savage beast; so, with piercing cries, she knelt and implored the protection of St. Ignatius. Suddenly she heard a joyful voice calling her. She recognized it; it was that of her child. The delighted woman arose, ran a short distance, and found the little boy seated among some fragments of rock. He smiled as she approached, and said:

“ ‘Mamma, mamma, here I am, safe and sound. The wolf suddenly stopped as if he were frightened; he opened his mouth and let me fall on the ground; then he looked fixedly at me, snuffed at my face, showed his teeth, and disappeared in the woods as if the devil were at his heels.’

“ From that day forth, there was never a wolf seen in those mountains. The mountaineers offered their most fervent thanks to the saint, kept in their hearts a feeling of lively gratitude, and at

space set about building their little-church. Meanwhile, a fearful pestilence broke out among the flocks, and again they had recourse to St. Ignatius, and the plague immediately ceased. About the same time a poor woman named Paola Mussa, of the village of Tortore, had a dying child who was almost at the last gasp. She rushed out of the cabin and hastened to the spot on which they were erecting the little church of St. Ignatius :

“ ‘Alas ! good saint,’ she cried, ‘save my son, and I will consider him a gift from thee.’ ”

“Immediately St. Ignatius appeared in a dazzling radiance, clad in shining garments. He raised his hand and extended it, as if in benediction, over the valley ; then, with a kind and gentle glance towards the poor woman, disappeared. She returned to her cabin full of joy, and found her child fresh and smiling in his little bed. When he saw her he cried out :

“ ‘Mamma, I am quite well again.’ ”

“The mother stood amazed ; then, full of exultation, seized the child in her arms and carried him to the parish priest, to whom she related the vision and the marvellous cure of her child, whom the priest had seen the day before given up by the physician. She begged him to celebrate for her, on the following morning, a Mass of thanksgiving for this stupendous favor. The priest on the following Sunday gave the mountaineers an account of the vision, and the surrounding parishes at once decided upon the erection of a grand church, to be built upon the point of the rock

where the saint had appeared. Architects and master masons were brought from Turin, and the temple was erected with the greatest magnificence, as you will see when you visit it. In the course of time an addition was made, in the form of a large house, where priests or pious laymen come during the summer to make the holy exercises of a retreat in this delightful solitude."

Ubaldo and the young girls listened with the deepest attention to this marvellous tale, shuddering at the thought of the wolves and the poor children whom they had devoured among the dreary gorges of the mountain.

"I will not go," cried Irene. "No, indeed, I will not go. I am afraid. Imagine if some wolf should suddenly spring out of his lair and seize me, in spite of my cries for help!"

"You need not be afraid of wolves," said the canon; "for since the blessing of St. Ignatius they have been neither seen nor heard, even in the distance, yet the winters are as long, the snow as deep, and the place as solitary as ever—for it is really a wolf country; but there is no danger of them returning, and not a single lamb is ever carried off now. It is a standing miracle."

Ubaldo and the girls waited impatiently for that Monday, which they felt sure would be the pleasantest day they had spent in the valley, and the most enjoyable one of the whole summer. At night they dreamt of wolves, and caverns, and children dragged into gloomy forests, and the girls that they called Ubaldo to their assistance, and that he

came with a sword and spear, and snatched its prey from the very jaws of the wolf. They sought and obtained strong and sure-footed mules which were accustomed to travelling in these mountains. These animals were properly saddled for Ubaldo, the professor, and the canon, whom the countess appointed chief or leader of the little band. For the ladies were prepared English saddles, with supports for the feet; but Lauretta, who always wished to be odd, persisted in having a pointed English saddle, entirely different from the others, although the mul-teers declared that such a saddle was extremely dangerous, both in the ascent and descent.

Ubaldo wore a red hunting-coat, with a horn slung over his shoulder, a hunting-knife and a little pouch at his belt; he carried a small leather whip, with handle made of the horn of a deer, in the top of which was a little whistle. So numerous was the train of mountaineers who, with their wives, made the ascent, preceded by mules bearing their provisions, that it resembled a caravan from Aleppo or Damascus crossing Libanus. As our party ascended, new prospects opened before them of unfamiliar valleys and mountain peaks, little torrents pouring through clefts in the rock and descending into ravines, where they mingled with limpid brooks that broke in mimic waves upon the stones of their beds. When they reached the village or hamlet of Tortore, they were amazed at sight of the huts or cabins, built of the trunks of trees or pieces of timber, cemented with dried

earth, and roofed in with thatches of straw, which the intermingled moss and grass rendered as green as a piece of turf. The smoke had no other escape from these cabins than through the door, which was therefore constantly left open; the walls were black, and usually quite moist. Through the clouds of smoke the women were to be seen preparing dinner for their little family, or wiping their eyes, reddened by the smoke, but having, nevertheless, an air of health and strength which was sufficient evidence of the healthfulness of these regions.

Below them, in the little valleys on the slope of the rock, young and pretty mountain girls kept their flocks, plaiting straw baskets or spinning wool and flax to be woven in the long winter evenings, while they sang the praises of the Blessed Virgin or St. Ignatius in sweet and melodious choruses. Seeing them, the gentle Antoinette dropped a tear to the memory of the time when she was a shepherdess among the Alps. Irene perceived this and said :

“ My friend, do not grieve over the memory of the melancholy past; think rather of your happiness in having passed through it. Have confidence in the goodness of God, who never forsakes his creatures.”

“ You are right, Irene. But these little shepherdesses remind me of my poor sister Clotilde’s sorrow at the death of Gaston. O Irene! perhaps among these poor mountaineers, clad in rude, coarse garments, shivering at the bitter and frosty



air from those frozen heights, are some poor young French girls of noble birth, who pine and weep, having lost their parents perhaps before their very eyes, and even now fear to be themselves discovered by some curious or malignant eyes. I always felt as if every eye was upon me, and that, recognized some day, I should be dragged away to be butchered. But one must have passed through these things to understand my feelings ”\*

Conversing thus, they reached the heights of Bas'ia, where, upon a broad esplanade formed by pick and spade, stood the grand church, whose spacious walls surround the sharp peak of rock, upon which is represented by a life-size statue the patriarch St. Ignatius in the attitude of threatening the wolves and blessing the surrounding mountains.

But as they made the ascent, just among the rocks which bordered the bank, Lauretta's mule, suddenly feeling the prick of the spur, gave a violent jerk. The path was narrow and rugged, the saddle without support; the young girl lost her balance, and, slipping from her seat, fell upon the river-bank.

The countess, who followed with the two priests, screamed; the muleteers ran to catch the mule, lest he should add to her danger, but Lauretta, having no support, rolled over the steep side of the embankment.

\* This was told by a young French girl of noble birth, who in her youth, flying from the Jacobins, who sought her life, had assumed the costume of a shepherdess.



## CHAPTER XXI.

GEORGE DE BERILLY.

FORTUNATELY, Laretta, meeting with no dangerous obstacle, fell upon the thick grass, her head coming on a little cluster of lentils and furze, which bent under her weight, and thus broke the violence of the fall, which might otherwise have proved fatal. She, however, escaped with a feeling of dizziness, a few bruises, and the loss of her beautiful broad-leaved hat of Italian straw, of which she was very proud, and which was entirely crushed and broken. The muleteers reached her by a few daring leaps, raised her, and having shaken the leaves and earth from her dress, made a sort of chair with their hands, upon which they carried her up to the path, where her companions, quite reassured as to her safety, rallied her a little on her tumble. Then the party resumed their way to the church.

Having reached it, they admired how, under the centre of the cupola, arose the immense fragment of rock on the point of which was represented the saint as he had appeared when he blessed the valley. At the base of the rock was the altar of the saint. There the Abbé Leardi said Mass, which

the party heard with great devotion. While the Countess Virginia still knelt before the altar praying to the saint for her husband, her children, and herself, the others went to the house to see if breakfast were ready, and, finding everything in order, Ubaldo returned softly to inform his mother, and went back to the house munching some crusts of *griscin* \* as an appetizer.

When the plentiful breakfast had been enjoyed, the party rose and went out in the meadow. It would be impossible to attempt a worthy description of the magnificent prospect from that crowning peak of the mountains. The eternal glaciers were shining in the rays of the sun; stretched beneath were deep valleys covered with gloomy forests, where the trees cast the dark-green shadow of their thickly-interlaced branches, through which the strongest sun had never penetrated, which no wind had ever shaken, and where supreme darkness, solitude, and sadness reigned with awe-inspiring quietude that none would dare to break or profane. In the far depth of these valleys they could perceive, at what seemed an immeasurable distance, the countless windings of the blue waters of the river Stura, of which the confused and murmuring sound, as it rustled through the clefts of the rocks, echoed among the mountains.

As our travellers contemplated the far-off wind-

\* *Griscin* is a sort of bread made in Piedmont. It is made in the form of long sticks. It has no crumb, and is very crisp to the teeth and delicate to the taste, besides being nutritive and easily digested.

ings of the Stura, Irene, who had withdrawn somewhat from the group and advanced towards a little grove at the foot of the rock, heard, at no great distance from her, a low, gentle sound which kept her for a moment motionless with surprise. Running to her mother, who was conversing with the canon, asking the names of the surrounding valleys, she said joyously :

“Mamma, come, I beg of you, to the edge of the woods. I heard such a sweet sound proceeding thence that I was quite charmed.”

“It is probably some nightingale,” replied the countess.

“Oh ! no, mamma,” cried Irene ; “the nightingales in the hedges around our garden sing very differently from that.”

The whole party then moved towards the edge of the grove to try and guess what species of birds produced such delightful music. Amid the dense foliage they could hear a sweet and most entrancing melody, swelling out into soft and plaintive notes, like those of a melodeon or harmonicon. It fell upon the ear in clear cadences, silvery trills, or high staccato passages, till slowly and lingeringly, like the last faint rays of a star at the coming of dawn, it died away on the distant air. At this unexpected harmony and plaintive melody the party were amazed, and looked at each other with mute interrogation. How could such graceful and tender music proceed from any musical instrument in this wild spot ? But as each stood lost in his own thoughts, the sweet melody changed into a rapid and well-exe-

cuted prelude, consisting of a series of trills and runs and harmonious chords, all performed with such exquisite skill and grace, each note falling so pure and silvery, that it filled the hearers' souls with a deep sense of enjoyment. Just as the last notes of the symphony were dying away, another sound arose and mingled with them—a hymn to the Virgin, rendered by a chorus of soprano and contralto voices, that seemed like the chanting of angels who had come down from heaven to lend a charm to the leafy silence of the forests.

The young girls listened breathlessly to the mysterious music, while tears, coming from the hidden recesses of the heart's emotion, stole softly down their cheeks, and the Countess Virginia, as well as the two priests, were struck with amazement ; but Ubaldo, with the restlessness of boyhood, could not restrain his impatience, but entered the wood and followed a little path which led into the thicket, to see whence these sounds proceeded. He presently returned, exclaiming breathlessly :

“Mamma, do you know there is a handsome, gentlemanly young man in there, and he has five little shepherds sitting round singing while he plays the flute and produces all that beautiful music.”

They waited till the concert was over, and then went into the wood to make the musician's acquaintance. They found him seated on a stone at the end of a little glade that lay in the middle of the wood, through which flowed a silver rivulet, issuing from a cleft in the moss-covered rock that



stood shaded by a cluster of ancient beech-trees. The musician wore a large, broad-leaved hat, fastened by a black satin ribbon tied under his chin ; he wore a waistcoat of Sedan cloth, very fine, but somewhat worn, which, with the rest of his costume, showed him to be a gentleman whom misfortune had overtaken.

When he saw the countess and her party approaching, he immediately rose and saluted them courteously, reddening a little while they stood before him undecided, till the countess said graciously :

“ Will you pardon us, sir, that, attracted by the swee’ne-s of your music, we ventured to interrupt your delightful concert, in which you make these little shepherds sing the praises of Mary in strains which are worthy of that heavenly patroness ; but you have given great proofs of your skill and patience in the training of these children.”

“ As for that, madame,” replied the musician, speaking in French, “ these little mountaineers have such quick sensibility, such warm feeling, and such fine, flexible, pure, true voices that it is not at all difficult to teach them the plaintive strains of the Italian melodies. These children already sing pretty well, although I have been only about five months in the neighborhood. They have learned some portions of Haydn’s ‘ Miserere,’ Pergolese’s ‘ Stabat,’ and Marcello’s Psalms, besides some little songs which I have set to some of the most beautiful airs of Paisiello, Mozart, Gluck, Porpora, and Cimarosa, which they sing with me

in the churches of Ceres and Mezzenile, or sometimes on the lawn in front of the church, under the shadow of the trees, where I exercise these little mountaineers, who are passionately fond of music."

Our party could not understand why a man so young and of such elegant manners should choose to live concealed in these rugged heights, among these rude and illiterate people, and in poor cabins where misery reigned supreme. The countess, even more interested than the others, speculated upon the probable causes which induced him to live thus cut off from the world.

When the stranger had finished his explanation, the countess again said courteously :

" We came up here to the shrine of St. Ignatius to honor him, and to pass a pleasant day in this cool, fresh air, which, blowing over the perpetual snow of these mountains, refreshes us greatly after the overpowering heat of the valley. If you will do us the favor to share our rural repast, we shall be most grateful, and, if you wish, your little pupils might come also and dine with us ; then, either before or after dinner, perhaps they will sing us some little songs."

" Madame," answered the gentleman, " I shall feel honored in accepting your kind invitation ; and though a poor exile will be but a sorry guest, your generous heart will doubtless pardon me if I do not contribute much to the general entertainment. Permit me now to give the children some instructions, and I shall join you immediately."

Turning to the shepherds, he said :

“ Isidore, go and call Bernardine to mind your flocks, since the ladies have had the goodness to invite us to dinner at the convent. Meanwhile, gather all the sheep into one flock ; as soon as Bernardine comes you can follow me up there. Enter by the little porch, and then you will be told what further to do.”

Having given some further instructions, the young man rejoined the party, and they moved on in the direction of the convent, where they sat down in the parlor. Without any preamble, Lauretta said, suddenly addressing the stranger :

“ You make your flute speak. I never heard so much feeling and expression brought out of any instrument, and tones so tender and sympathetic that they stir the most delicate fibres of the heart. At Padua, in the chapel of the saint, I heard the celebrated Pasqualini play admirable solos upon the violin ; but he did not seem to attain the perfection of your lingering cadences and high staccato notes. I can even say that the little octave flutes of the four sweet-toned organs in the chapels here, which are so celebrated, and certainly resemble the song of the wood-lark, do not equal the inimitable tones of your flute. You must have studied under some good master who was himself a pupil of Nardini, Houssaye, or Pagini, the wonders of the Italian school.”

“ I have studied considerably, mademoiselle,” replied the stranger, “ and have always endeavored to catch some of the beauties of Haydn, Handel,

Gluck, and Mozart, and combine them with those of the best Italian masters.”

“We love singing,” replied the young girl; “will you, then, sing and accompany yourself in one of the airs from ‘Molinara’ or ‘Nina’ of Paisiello, or those from ‘Figaro’ and the ‘Finta Giardiniera’ of Mozart, or the duet from ‘Chiari’?”

“Pardon me, mademoiselle,” replied the young Frenchman, “that I am compelled to commence our acquaintance by a refusal. My present condition and the bleeding wounds in my heart do not permit me as yet to sing or listen to profane songs. Sorrow makes me have recourse to sacred music, which is an unfailing source of hope and consolation in sorrow, and of which I have continual need.”

The countess, horrified at Lauretta’s indiscretion, hastened to add:

“Will you, dear sir, bring up your little shepherds, whose pure, sweet voices must go far to console the bitterness of the most afflicted heart. Ubaldo, call them; they are below.”

The children entered the room. Their master ranged them in a circle, and said:

“Come, my little ones, we shall sing a verse of Pergolese’s ‘Stabat,’ then Mozart’s ‘Tuba Mirum,’ Paisiello’s ‘Agnus,’ and conclude with the ‘Redde mihi lætitiā’ of Haydn’s ‘Miserere’; and if we have time after dinner, you, Doro, will sing the solo from Handel’s ‘Messiah,’ and you, Maurizio, the ‘Andante’ from Stradella’s ‘Introit,’ and the ‘Adagio’ from Tartini’s ‘Gradual.’”

These peasant children sang so harmoniously, in such good time, and with so much expression that no one would have supposed that they did not know a single note of music; and so well did they execute the trills, runs, pauses, and portamentos that the best of masters could not have found fault with them. Their hearers were perfectly charmed; every eye was fixed on the singers and on him who accompanied them. When the steward announced dinner, the company arose, embraced the little shepherds, and the countess desired Ubaldo to bring them down stairs and give them into Julie's care. Then the party entered the dining-room, where the arrangements were all of a rural character. Under the glasses and bottles were laid green chestnut-leaves artistically cut into stars, while filbert-leaves were placed round the necks of the bottles. The middle of the table was so arranged that it formed a little meadow of soft green moss with tufts of grass, from which arose the tomb of an old shepherd, at the foot of which was a little plot of daisies, blue-bells, lilies of the valley as white as milk, and other wild-flowers of various colors which the young ladies had culled among the rocks or on the banks of the streams. The dessert consisted of sweet-smelling mountain strawberries, little scarlet raspberries, purple hedge-berries, and myrtle-berries as sweet as honey.

The dinner was enlivened by pleasant conversation, in which the stranger took part with a grace and propriety which betrayed the intelligent and well-bred man, whose thoughts and feelings were



noble and elevated, although through all was perceptible a deep sadness which he sought to conquer, that he might take his share in the general merriment. The countess having remarked that she perceived he was French, he answered that he was a native of Lorraine, whereupon the discourse naturally turned upon the events of the Revolution, and the fear which prevailed that Italy might in turn be afflicted. The Abbé Leardi asked him if he thought the danger as imminent as in Piedmont it was said to be, and if he thought the French would really cross those well-defended mountains.

“There is no question,” replied he, “but that the French desire to make a descent upon Italy; however, and I sincerely trust it may be the case, the valor of your soldiers and the strength of your mountains may prevent this invasion, though I fear the contrary. French heroism under the yoke of the Revolution is changed to a sort of despairing fury. The French generals who return to France without having gained a victory are accused of treason or cowardice, are cast into prison, and are finally guillotined. For instance, the brave Custine (under whose banner I have fought), having succeeded Dumouriez in the command, led the army, with more courage than foresight, into Germany. He then displayed such skill and energy in the disaster that he succeeded in saving his soldiers by a retreat worthy of a lion returning majestically to his den in the forest. Nevertheless, the Convention accused him of felony and condemned him to death. Therefore, you see that if

an army set forward to invade Italy, it would allow itself to be massacred, but would never retreat.

“Add to that the examples of Lyons, Bordeaux, and Marseilles, not to speak of La Vendée. Your armies and your towns would have everything to fear from the fury of these ruffians, if they were not entirely victorious. Lyons, which was brave enough to resist the shock of the torrent, was bombarded; the blood of her citizens overflowed the streets; General Couthon burned or destroyed twenty-five thousand houses. Collot d’Herbois had sixty persons a day beheaded, and when the executioners cried out, ‘We are dying of hunger,’ he answered: ‘Inflame yourselves with love of country and you will recover your strength.’

“Then, to urge them on, he exclaimed with the fury of a dragon :

“‘What means this silence? The vengeance of a country should resound like thunder. We must have the booming of cannon.’

“Then he had the guns turned upon a multitude of citizens pressed between two walls. The fierce Collot said at Bordeaux and Marseilles :

“‘The guillotine is too slow; the hammer and the pick do not destroy fast enough. Up, my Republicans! the guns will clear away all this rubbish. The mine will make all these buildings dance.’

“You see, therefore, that with these fearful antecedents before their eyes, the Italians will not be very anxious to open their cities’ gates and expose themselves to the fury of these wild beasts. Then consider the machinations of the Freemasons.

who nourish more malignant and disloyal sentiments towards their country than you can imagine. They dwell in your cities ; they enlist in your regiments, where they discourage the brave and deceive the faithful. Many of your women, even the most distinguished, take part in these odious schemes, and the future thus prepared for this beautiful country makes me shudder. Oh ! yes, you have also your Rolands, who fan the flame of the Revolution with incredible activity and success."

"What !" interrupted the countess, "you really believe that in Italy, too, there are women so foolish and wicked as to take part in these schemes which threaten to desolate our country ?"

"Are you astonished, madame ?" said the stranger ; "and yet there are numbers of them in all classes, the most illustrious, deceptive, and energetic, who deceive with the craft and cunning of demons. Do you not know that, like sponges, they have absorbed the strange and fallacious doctrines of our French Encyclopædists ? The men are corrupted by the philosophical works of Rousseau, Bolingbroke, Freret, Condorcet, Hobbes, and Helvetius ; but women destroy their heart and brain by reading novels, romances, books of travel and of amusement, poetry, sentimental dramas, love letters, and a thousand other subtle and dangerous poisons, contained in elegant little volumes, ornamented with fine engravings, printed in the most beautiful style, bound in silk, velvet, or morocco, with gilt edges or ornamentations of gold or silver. If a woman is good, intelligent, pure, and right-

mind, she is a blessing ; but if she has departed from the straight line of virtue, she becomes a very active instrument of perdition. But pardon me, madame, and overlook the rude frankness of a poor exile in using such strong language in this gentle company."

Involuntarily every eye turned on Lauretta, who had seemed to take no notice, but listened with cold and impassive disdain ; but when she perceived that every one was looking at her she blushed, and, to change the conversation, asked the stranger if he played any other instrument besides the flute.

"Yes, mademoiselle," he answered ; "I play the violin, and have taken lessons from some of the best masters at Paris and Strasbourg. I am very fond of that instrument, and might, perhaps, have become a skilful performer ; but . . ."

His face changed, he grew pale, and his brow contracted. Every one was silent respecting his emotion and its probable cause. Virginia, deeply touched by his sorrow, at last broke silence, saying :

"We perceive, dear sir, that, most innocently, we have touched upon a topic which is deeply painful to you. You must pardon what we have done so unconsciously, and if you would find it a relief to tell us of your misfortunes, we should be glad to listen ; for most of us have known sorrow, and, therefore, if we cannot alleviate your sorrow, we can at least offer you our sympathy."

"Madame," replied he, "since I have been in Italy I have never made known my sorrow to any

one but God. I came to these wild and solitary mountains, that among their rocks and shades I might lament my fate. It seems to me, too, that the very echoes of these crags repeat a beloved name which, in my sorrow, I often call aloud, and it gives me a sort of relief to hear the name sounding through the calm and tranquil air of this solitude."

"Then you love some one," answered Virginia, "and your words would seem to imply that the object of your tenderness is far from you. This affection must be very pure when you confide it to God, the infinite source of that eternal love of which the loves of earth are but faint and darkened reflections, though they seem to us so ardent and imperishable."

"Yes, madame ; I love, and my love is all the greater that the object of it is no longer upon earth. God has called her to himself, to the bosom of that brilliant and single light which shines in the highest heavens with supernal lustre. I assure you that the sweet influence of that holy star is a never-failing source of strength by which I endure the cruel anguish of our separation."

Wiping the perspiration from his forehead with a silk handkerchief, he proceeded :

"Madame, my name is George de Berilly. I am by birth a Lorraincse, and the son of a noble and wealthy father, who gave me an education suitable to my rank, at the same time impressing upon me those lessons of piety and religion which can alone preserve the heart in virtue and subdue the vio-



lence of youthful passions. I owe to this Catholic education my preservation from the errors of infidelity, with which I was brought into close contact. It gave me strength to endure all the sufferings which I have had to undergo, by teaching me hope and confidence in God. I also learned many a hard lesson in the school of misfortune, and sometimes thought of turning towards that vain philosophy by which the enemies of God endeavor to replace religion ; but, oh ! how poor this philosophy seemed to me, how insufficient to console human sorrow. Human reason, friendship, science, cannot touch certain wounds in the heart, or, rather, the more they touch them the more they bleed and the more incurable they become.”

The Abbé Leardi and the Canon of Lanzo, hearing the young man's noble sentiments, readily understood that an education founded on the fear of God, the beginning and end of all wisdom, is strong and powerful. They heartily deplored the unhappy fate of so many young people, whose souls are naturally good and susceptible of virtue, but are misled by a false education which leads to their ruin. Ubaldo and the young girls, who did not yet understand how eloquent a passionate heart deeply touched by sorrow may become, thought that Monsieur de Berilly was somewhat deranged ; but the countess felt the depth of his grief and the hold it had taken upon his noble and elevated soul, and begged him to continue his story.

“On the banks of the Loire,” continued George de Berilly, “in one of the most beautiful spots of

the many reflect'ed in that broad stream, stands the little town of Saint-Florent, very neat and very pretty, beautified by fine orchards and smiling flower-gardens, and which its inhabitants find to be a calm and delightful place of abode. In one of the prettiest quarters of the town, on the river-bank, was a little villa, surrounded by a garden wherein grew both foreign and indigenous plants, shading little rivulets which meandered among the flowers and collected in a basin in the midst of a little meadow. Here dwelt Monsieur d'Hérard, a brave captain of the Canadian army, who had made several campaigns, in which, by his personal valor, foresight, and military experience, he had materially aided in gaining more than one victory. But the fatigue endured in long and difficult journeys along the river St. Lawrence or among the lakes of the Huron country, and bivouacs amid snow and ice in the open air, without tents or fire, sleeping in a hammock swung from the bough of a tree, exposed to the wind and rain, had enfeebled his health and invalidated him from the service. Having received two wounds in the chest and one in the thigh, he asked and obtained an honorable discharge, and retired to Saint-Florent, deeply regretted, by his soldiers, and bearing with him the esteem of his generals and the honor and affection of the king. The veteran now devoted himself to the cultivation of his fine property, which he placed under the direction of skilful and experienced men, procuring all the newest inventions which were of practical utility. He loved to

work in his garden and to enjoy to the fullest extent the simple pleasures of domestic peace with his pious and virtuous wife and a charming young daughter, Leonore, who was born in Montreal, Canada, and in 1788 was scarcely fifteen years old.

“ She had brought with her from America, whence she had returned very young, that healthy complexion and that ease and suppleness of movement which are noticeable in all who have lived in a cold, bracing climate, led a simple and frugal life, and taken much exercise in the open air, which Leonore had always done while her father was in the army. Having grown up at her mother’s side, she had learned from the maternal example, that pure and sincere piety which is the fairest ornament of a young Christian, the heavenly nourishment of innocence of the heart and the angelic light of the mind.

“ Leonore combined with beauty of form the ingenuous grace and sweetness which made her ready to fulfil perfectly all the domestic duties which her father, to please his child, had confided to her. She was constantly occupied in performing some little service for her parents ; she had charge of the wardrobe and pantry, she arranged the meals, and always with her own hands put sugar in her father’s cup, poured out his coffee, and buttered his bread. She had studied his taste in food, and knew exactly what delicacies he preferred. Knowing that he loved flowers, she placed every morning in his oratory a little bouquet of flowers which formed his name, Victor. For instance, she placed

together a violet, an iris, a camellia, a tulip, an oleander, and a rose. Every day she tried to change the flowers, always finding those which represented the six initial letters of her father's name, and, of course, Monsieur d'Hérard was always delighted.

“ Leonore also assisted her father in his accounts. She kept memoranda, the day-book, ledger, and his bank-book; she gave quittances, made out the workmen's accounts, and added up figures with an extraordinary ease and diligence, which resembled more that of a book-keeper in a store or a warehouse than a young lady. And all the time her lofty and elevated mind ennobled her slightest action and raised her above their pettiness. She never permitted any of the servants to wait upon her father, who, being old, required many little offices performed for him, which she always did herself.

“ All this filled her father's heart with joy, and he took every opportunity of testifying his pleasure to Leonore, especially in the evening after supper, when she remained a long time chatting with him, keeping him company and dispelling his drowsiness, after her mother had retired to her apartment. After dinner, knowing how much her father loved music, she would take her harp and sing his favorite airs to him. She was an accomplished musician, having taken lessons from a chorister in the College of Saint-Florent who in his youth, in Venice, had been one of the best pupils of Marcello in vocal, as he was of Tartini in instrumental, music. Leonore played the harp

with such sweet and exquisite expression that under her fingers the strings of the instrument became the interpreters of the deepest emotions, which could not otherwise be expressed.

“Whilst Monsieur d’Hérard thus enjoyed in this quiet spot days full of holy peace in the bosom of his family, and constantly thanked God for having given him a pious wife and a good and affectionate daughter, the first troubles of 1789, which eventually caused the ruin of the kingdom, began to be felt at Paris.

“I was an officer in a regiment which was garrisoned on the Maine and Loire. I was sent to take command of a detachment quartered at Saint-Florent. In this little town, as is usual in small places, I soon became acquainted with the principal residents, and especially Monsieur d’Hérard, who, being an old soldier, became on very good terms with me, treated me with kind and soldierly frankness, and gave me much good advice. The miserable robbers who laid waste the country often stripped his beautiful garden; but he restrained his indignation, lest, if he irritated them, they might revenge themselves on his family.

“I went very frequently to visit Monsieur d’Hérard, who always received me with great kindness and was very friendly to me. I thus had occasion to admire the noble qualities so conspicuous in Leonore, whose beauty was the least of her attractions. I soon learned to appreciate her merit, and I became so ardently attached to her that I begged God to give her to me as a wife. No one knew of



this deep and ardent affection, for at my coming and going I refrained from even the slightest token of it, and aroused no suspicion whatever of it. My conduct was always reserved; I never permitted myself the least word or gesture which might render me unworthy of the friendship and esteem of these good people.

“I have already said that Leonore played the harp and I played the violin. When Monsieur d’Hérard invited me to breakfast or dinner, we always had a concert afterwards, Leonore singing the most beautiful airs of the Italian school. Some gentlemen, priests or others, often came in, and among them Leonore’s master, who, although somewhat old, sang the tenor part with a skill which matched remarkably well with the contralto of his pupil, and often took part in our concerts. Leonore and her master sang duets from Gabrielli, Paisiello, Chiozzetto, Cimarosa, and particularly Farinelli, who has set to music the most beautiful and flowing verses of Metastasio.

“I loved her without the slightest hope of being loved in return. The parental eyes soon perceived that something new was stirring in Leonore’s heart. Her mother, going one day to her daughter’s writing-desk, found various lines in her copy-book formed entirely of the name of George, sometimes in large capitals, sometimes in short-hand; here traced in blue or red ink, surrounded by various flourishes and ornaments, or there written in clear, round hand. She found sundry pressed leaves or flowers, carefully folded, and placed in little boxes,

bearing the inscription : ' Given by George.' Her parents also remarked that when, being on duty, I did not go to Monsieur d'Hérard's, the young girl, who was frank and innocent, did not conceal her vexation at my non-appearance. God, in the order of his providence, so disposed matters that an event occurred which was the cause of my brief joy and lasting sorrow.

" One evening I informed the family that I had just received an order which transferred me with my detachment into Maine, where I was to remain for some days and then rejoin my regiment, to give chase to the assassins who were slaying the rich and laying waste the provinces. The morning of my departure Leonore's parents were astonished to find that she was absent from the breakfast-table. They enquired of her maid where she was.

" " Mademoiselle dismissed me without permitting me to dress her hair,' said the maid.

" Her father, in alarm, hastened to her room, and found her in her wrapper, her head buried in the pillow, weeping bitter tears. Taking her by the hand and caressing her, he asked :

" " What is the matter, my child ? What has occurred ? Have you a headache ? Come, come, Norine, do not distress me. How do you feel ?'

" " Oh ! very badly, papa, very badly. George is gone ; George will not come back. God knows how long it will be before I see him. George will be in great danger and will have to fight the Jacobins. How could I be well, papa ? I love George so much, because he is good and gentle

and you love him, too, so that makes me love him still better.'

"At this candid manifestation of the sentiments of her innocent heart, thus entirely revealed, without the slightest dissimulation, the good father's heart was deeply touched. He said as he embraced her :

" 'Oh! well, my dear little Leonore, do not grieve for George. You will see him again in a few days, be assured ; and meantime pray for him.'

" 'Pray for him ! After you and mamma, George is always first in my prayers. I must even admit that sometimes my thoughts run on, and I pray first for George ; but that is a temptation, and I drive it away. You first, papa ; I always scold myself when George is first. You are glad, papa, that I love him ?'

" 'Yes, Norine, love him, for he is good and worthy of you. But come to breakfast, calm yourself, and say nothing of this to any one.'

"Leonore wiped away her tears, and, reassured by her father's kind words, went down to the dining-room with him.

"Scarcely had I returned from my expedition than Monsieur d'Hérard came to my quarters and demanded an explanation of my sentiments towards his daughter. I answered that I was completely captivated by the virtues, innocence, frankness, and simplicity of Leonore, as well as by her piety and affection for her parents. I added that I desired nothing in the world so much as to be loved by her and become her husband. Her father, deeply touched by my frankness, pressed my hand,

with tears in his eyes, and begged me to accompany him home. Leonore was working on some embroidery at her mother's side. Seeing me, she blushed, smiled sweetly, and after wishing me good-morning asked me, with slight trembling in her voice, if I had run much risk in my encounters with those wretches.

“Monsieur d'Hérard then turned to his daughter and asked her gravely and seriously :

“ ‘ Leonore, here is George ; do you love him ?

“ ‘ Very much,’ she answered.

“ ‘ If God gave him to you for a husband, would you accept him willingly ?’

“ ‘ I would not ask better, papa.’

“ ‘ Reflect seriously, my child ; recommend yourself to God ; consult your mother and your confessor.’

“ Monsieur d'Hérard brought me into his study. We spoke of my position, my fortune, my connections, and it was decided that, my father being dead, I would write to my guardians, and that my marriage would be postponed till the year 1792, when I hoped to be promoted to the command of a regiment. Some days later Monsieur d'Hérard, having assembled his friends, after a sumptuous repast had the marriage contract signed. We were then betrothed and the time fixed for the celebration of our marriage. We now had several months of uninterrupted happiness. We continued to pass the time much as usual, and enjoyed our little concerts, while every day I discovered new attractions in my dear and charming Leonore.

“About the end of the summer I asked leave to go and visit my property in Lorraine and regulate my affairs. Monsieur d’Hérard accompanied me. On our return to Saint-Florent the Congress of Pilnitz and warlike preparations began to be the great topic of conversation. General Custine concentrated the forces, reunited the troops from different garrisons, and directed the march of the army towards the Rhine. I was therefore obliged to leave the calm and happy retreat of Saint-Florent and hasten with my regiment to headquarters.

“I need not speak of Leonore’s tears and anguish, nor of the bitterness of our farewell and our vows and promises then exchanged. We first encamped in Alsace, then went to Germany, and was present at the assault on Frankfort, Mayence, and Spire. I conducted myself so that I obtained the grade of captain on the battle-field.

“You know how the army re-entered France, and how soon after that time troubles arose in the Bocage and La Vendée, which occasioned the shedding of so much generous blood in the cause of religion and of monarchy. Learning that a number of troops were despatched to the Loire, I asked and obtained permission to join that campaign, hoping thus to be near my betrothed. The encounters were frequent and bloody; the royalists fought like lions, and our soldiers committed the most horrible atrocities, especially those of the National Guard, which was the putrid essence of Jacobinism. A troop of Vendéans had taken up their quarters in Saint-Florent. General Kléber permitted



me to proceed with my company to the siege of that place, whose inhabitants I hoped to save from the excesses of the Republicans.

“ The siege began ; the town was fiercely assailed for two days, as the royalists would not surrender on any terms. Whilst our cannons were making a breach on one side, a detachment of the National Guard scaled the walls on the other and rushed furiously into the town. The firing within apprised me of what had occurred. Seized with frantic rage, I gave spurs to my horse, and, regardless of the enemy’s fire, entered by one of the gates just opened. I was followed by a few faithful soldiers. The pillage had commenced, and we could hear the groans and cries of the poor citizens who were being massacred. Old men, women, and children fell victims to the blind fury of these wretches ; some poor little infants, dashed from the windows of houses, fell under the feet of our horses.

“ A party of these cut-throats had forced their way into Monsieur d’Hérard’s house, while he, with his wife and daughter, had shut themselves up in the most remote apartment, where they knelt in prayer, expecting every moment to be put to death. Meanwhile, the ruffians below broke and destroyed everything ; robbing, pillaging, killing the servants, and all the time shouting :

“ ‘ Where are the dogs of royalists ? Let them come out. Death, death to them ! ’

“ They reached the last door which separated them from their victims, and readily broke it in.

They at once perceived the three poor people kneeling, pale and trembling, at their prayers. No sooner had they appeared than Leonore rose impetuously, and, running to meet them with outstretched arms, cried :

“ ‘ Kill me, kill me, put me to death ; let my blood satisfy you ; spare my parents ! We are now in your power as, a short time ago, we were in that of the royalists.’ ”

“ Leonore’s youth and beauty and the emotion with which she uttered these generous words calmed for an instant the fury of these ruffians, who stood surprised and irresolute. But other wretches arrived, and, without the least pity, fell upon the hapless family and put them to death. I hastened thither, . . . but too late. On the first step of the stairs I stumbled over the body of the valet, Denis. I leaped over his corpse, rushed into the rooms, and came at length to the farthest apartment. The assassins were there. I gave a cry of horror.

“ ‘ Stop, stop, unhappy men ; spare my wife !’ ”

“ O my God ! Leonore lay covered with blood beside the bodies of her father and mother. She was still breathing. I threw myself on my knees beside her. I called her. She opened her eyes, looked at, and recognized me. A ray of joy lit up her face, her lips parted, she murmured :

“ ‘ George ! too late ! Jesus ! Jesus !’ . . . and she expired.

“ I then fell senseless in the blood of my betrothed. The monsters, seeing me thus, cried :

‘He is a royalist. To the devil with the dog!’ And striking me with their swords, they left me to die. Then they pillaged the house and departed. The report spread that I had been killed with the d’Hérard family; the news even went as far as Vienna through the papers. My soldiers found me still alive, carried me gently into the house where I had lived while in garrison. They took every care of me, and God willed that I should recover. I escaped all pursuit, and, under an assumed name, quitted France. I went to Germany, where I wandered about for some time, always bearing with me the appalling image of the dear ones I had loved as I saw them last, tormented by the thought that by arriving ten minutes sooner I could have saved them. God has since been my only resource; in Mary alone have I found balm for my wounds, in the heavenly inspirations of my angel guardian the only peace for my heart.

“After the victories gained by General Hoche in Germany, where he valiantly regained the lost lines of Weissemburg and repulsed the Austrians in the Palatinate, I repaired to Switzerland, where I remained for some time; but the new victories of Pichegru drove me thence. I then went to Sempione, and, passing by Monte Rosa, came to hide myself in these craggy heights, where I drag out my existence among the shepherds, occupying myself in teaching Catechism and sacred music to these dear little children. I beg of you, ladies, to pray for me, that God may grant me, not, indeed, forgetfulness of my sorrow, that I do not ask, but

strength to endure it with perfect submission to his holy will, which is sometimes incomprehensible to us, but always just."

His listeners were almost all in tears, and the countess said, wiping her eyes:

"Mr. George, come often to my castle, and spend some of your time in the domestic peace of our household. It will do you good, and your society will be of the greatest advantage to my Ubaldo. Come, I beg of you ; you will do us a favor."

Monsieur de Berilly courteously thanked the countess, and promised to come down to the castle in a few days.





## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE MONASTERY OF LANZO.

IN the wild and wooded Valley of Lanzo stands a solitary mountain, approached on every side by broad, smooth paths, making it easy of access, and terminating on the summit in a splendid esplanade, which seems to crown the mountain, and in the centre of which stands the hermitage or monastery of the Camaldolese monks, surrounded by a great stone cloister, whose sturdy walls at once inclose and protect it. Outside of these walls was to be seen the fine prospect of rich and fertile fields, descending in regular gradation to the foot of the mountain, where they were watered by the pure stream of the Banna, which comes down from the highest peaks of the snow-clad Alps. These meadows, according to their exposition, produced vines of the rarest grapes, or grain, or barley, or hay, or wheat. On the more sheltered side grew various kinds of vegetables, such as beans, peas, or lentils, and in the shade of an overhanging rock were little meadows of fresh, green grass and herbs; but on the opposite, where there was a northern exposure, groves of pine and fir trees sprang up among the tall crags, mingled with a few larches and yews, of



which the intermingled branches formed a dark and sombre shade, engendering a sublime melancholy very favorable to contemplation and meditation.

Within the enclosure, then, arose, sumptuous and majestic, the abbey church, with its ancient towers, containing a fine chime of bells, of which the sound re-echoed through the valley, carried from peak to peak, far into the distance, speaking with wonderful power to the hearts of the humble peasants, who amid their toils in the fields remembered that those solemn sounds called the monks to sing the praises of God, the ruler of the sun and rain, and the author of the life and vegetation of trees and plants. Close by the church stood the novitiate (*asceterio*), surrounded by dark and thickly-planted cypress-trees, in the midst of which, at the head of a small meadow, stood the hermitage of the master of novices, who guided and directed them in their arduous life of silence and penance. From the *asceterio* a little avenue, bordered on either side by woods, led to the choir, which consists of three rows of stalls arising behind the great altar, and of which the backs were beautifully ornamented with rich and heavy carvings. This was the work of the ancient monks of the order, who were perfect masters of carving, enamelling, as well as of the joiner's trade, and used the gouge and chisel upon the branches or trunks of these hard trees, as if they were the soft and porous wood of the linden, which is so easy to cut. Carvings in the forms of arabesques, leaves, heads of dragons or sphinxes adorned the arms upon which

rested the elbows of the monks while they sang the long psalmody of the night. In the centre was the throne or high seat of the abbot, on the back of which, in wood of various colors, is the view of a temple with long and majestic pillars, producing a beautiful effect. In the midst of the choir were the reading-desks, also heavily carved, and at the base of which were niches containing the statues of St. Romuald and other holy monks and anchorites.

Outside of the church was the square, shaded by the thick foliage of linden and walnut trees, whence descended, broad and spacious, to the east and west, an avenue along which stood the cells of the monks. Each cell was a hermitage, with a sort of little porch, across which ran a beam, serving as a bench, where the monk sat to read or meditate when he desired to enjoy the fresh air or the pleasant warmth of the sun. In the left side of the porch was a little door leading to the hermitage by a gallery running on both sides of the hermit's abode, which was divided into three compartments. Upon entering, to the right hand was an alcove, in which, laid upon two benches, was the pallet of straw whereon the anchorite, clad in his habit, reposed at night; at the foot of this couch was another compartment, serving as a work-room, and the window of which gave out upon the porch. The rest of the apartment was a sort of little sitting-room, where fire was kept lighted day and night.

This room opened into the little oratory, where the monk had his altar with its large crucifix, and before which stood a kneeling-bench. Beyond this

was another little room used as a cellar, and outside the spring of fresh water where the monk washed his clothes and brought water to sprinkle his little garden. This little garden lay in front of the hermitage, and was enclosed by a little wall, in which there was a grained door opening on the avenue.

The garden had four paths or alleys, in the form of a cross, bordered by thyme, sage, or marjoram, and in the beds of which the hermit planted lettuce, rosemary, sweet basil, or chives, besides various kinds of flowers. There was a window in the little parlor, near which the monk took his humble repast, and which gave out upon the porch, forming a sort of cupboard with two shelves, whereon the lay brother placed the bowl of soup and the scanty allowance of frugal food of which the monk partook. When he required oil, salt, bread, or matches, he placed on the shelf of the cupboard the empty salt-cellar, or oil-bottle, or a match, or crumb of bread, so that, without breaking silence, the lay-brother, who came twice a day to the window, might understand and supply his wants.

No sound ever broke the deep silence of these sacred precincts, and, notwithstanding their numerous inhabitants, no voice was ever heard but that of prayer and chanting from the choir, whence arose celestial hosannas through the dark stillness of the midnight, at the first rising of the sun, and at its setting. The monk quitted the choir in silence, passed by the cells of the other solitaries, and entered his own, where he heard no sound save the mono-

tonous murmur of the spring, the crackling of the wood in the chimney, the peals of thunder in summer, and the flapping of eagles' wings in winter. From afar came to him at times the plaintive cry of the solitary sparrow, seeming to invite him to a slight repose, as he had kept watch in the night singing the praises of the Lord. In the month of May the nocturnal song of the nightingale proceeded from the forests of pines which clothe the base of the mountain, and seemed to blend its sweet melody with that of the servants of God, who came forth from their cells as the last rays of the moon descended behind the mountains, to obey the first stroke of the bell calling them to sing the Prime.

If the profane eyes of those who at the same hour come out from obscene theatres, dangerous dances, feasting or gaming, could penetrate that holy cloister, and, by the light of the stars shining in the firmament, behold the anchorites in their white gowns, long flowing beards, which appear from beneath their cowls, hands wrapped in the folds of their sleeves, heads bowed upon their breasts, every breath laden with heavenly aspirations, what would be the sensations of that worldly soul, burning with tumultuous and unrestrained passions which fill it with bitterness! He would perceive upon those faces the calmness and serenity proceeding from that sweet peace, the recompense of a heart that has been victorious over itself, subdued its affections, and turned all its love to God alone, loving him with an immortal love which shall be its crown and reward. But the car-

nal man could not rise to such a height, nor comprehend it ; for he knows no other delights than the vain and transient pleasures of the earth.

Nevertheless, more than one poetic imagination, more than one heart sensible of the harmony of the beautiful, would love to picture to themselves these hermit souls, passing one by one in white vestments, silent and solitary, under the rays of the moon, which descend like a shower of silver from the pyramidal heights of the cypresses and through the picturesque shadows of the lindens, and compare them unto angels of the night, bringing to sleepers the sweet dreams and roseate visions of the peace of the Lord.

But these joyous, youthful imaginations always depict the Camaldolese monk in the warm season between May and September, under a serene sky, by the trembling light of the stars, the breath of gentle zephyrs, the sweet murmur of rivulets meandering among flowers, never dreaming of the severe and bitter nights of the long winter. To understand their severity, one would have to transport himself to the Valley of Lanzo in December or January, to the summit of Monte Corona, or to the immeasurable fastnesses of Camaldoli, which arises from among the Apennines to the greatest height in Italy, far above the other mountain chains, so that it can be perceived from the two seas, the Adriatic and Tyrrhennian, as well as from the islands which cover them. Here the cold commences in October, and in November the snow is already very high, and the bitter north winds



struggle and wrestle with the ancient oaks, pines, and elms of the forest, freezing everything on its passage, the deep ravines, the rushing streams, and the rivers which empty into the Arno.

Oh ! how dreary a thing it seems to us to be alone at such a season in these hermitages, and to see through the frosted panes of the little window only the frost and snow. Everything is sad and sorrowful, and nature is dead among the craggy heights, dead everywhere. In the deep midnight, while the great flakes of snow fall noiselessly upon the earth, the deep sound of the bell scarcely breaks the solemn silence calling the monks to Matins. Then those men whose office it is to clear away the snow come forth with their feet encased in straw, with ample gaiters of goatskin. They proceed with their shovels to clear a path by which the hermits may pass to the choir, for the snow is so high upon the ground that it reaches to the window of the cell. These strong young mountaineers throw the snow from right to left with their shovels, and a great wall arises on either side, between which the hermit passes slowly, wrapped in his cloak, his head covered with his cowl, bearing in his hand his little dark-lantern. Then he enters the choir, where the monotonous chants seem to freeze on the frosty atmosphere as they arise through the howling storm.

“ Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps.

“ Fire and hail, snow and ice and stormy winds, that fulfil his word,

“Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars.

“Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and feathered fowls.

“Kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth.

“Young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is exalted.

“His praise is above heaven and earth.”

Having finished the Matins, the hermit passed out again into the freezing air and pelting snow, and, re-entering his hermitage, warmed himself over the little blaze before stretching himself, all dressed, upon his couch, to take a few moments' sleep; but scarcely had he closed his eyes when the bell for Prime warned him to leave the warm cell and return to the choir, where, after the chant was ended, he heard or said Mass in one of the lateral chapels; then he again returned to his cell half-frozen, and unable to warm himself by drinking a cup of warm milk, coffee, or chocolate, for these anchorites take nothing in the morning. They never eat meat, nor take even soup. Besides their frequent fasts, they have two Lents—that of St. Martin, at Christmas, and that of Quinquagesima, at Easter—during which they only partake of one meal a day, consisting of a few herbs or a little salt fish. About midday the lay brother comes from the kitchen with a bowl of bean or pea soup, which he places on the window with two little dishes, one containing a sort of dried paste or

stock-fish, and the other some salt fish. They receive some wine in an earthen jar, and they drink it out of a wooden cup with two handles.

In the hermitage each solitary prays and meditates in his oratory, and studies in his sitting-room, and in the fine season walks in his little garden, which is always well cultivated and adorned with every variety of flowers, for some of the monks, besides having made a profound study of botany, understand the practical part of horticulture.

Since Ubaldo had come with his mother to live at the Castle of Lanzo, very often towards evening he would mount his Andalusian horse and ride along the valley in the direction of Cirié. When he reached the mountain of the hermits which we have just described, he entered the *Foresteria*, or guest quarter, leaving his horse to the care of his servant, who always accompanied him. Here dwelt for seventy years an old man who was now in his ninety-fifth year, and was passing the last years of his life in the odor of sanctity. He was an uncle of the Marquis di San Roberto, Ubaldo's grandfather. He was only twenty-two years of age, and esquire to Victor Amadeus, when he became desperately enamored of a daughter of the Count of Buttiglieria, whom her father united in marriage to a son of the house of Pampará. The young man was so overpowered with grief and indignation that he became disgusted with the court and the world, both of which he abandoned without saying farewell to the king or to his relatives, repaired to the Hermitage of Lanzo, and asked permission to

enter the Order of St. Romuald. Long and violent were the efforts of the enemy of man to turn him from his pious purpose ; but he fought valiantly, and, having overcome the first furious assaults, easily breasted the fierce waves which would have borne him with them ; and, having subdued his impetuous anger, the sea became smooth and calm, and he could enjoy the tranquillity of his retreat.

Now, this holy old man, who was almost a centenarian, boasted that he had never, for more than seventy years, tasted meat nor broth, but had lived entirely on herbs, vegetables, and salt fish. Notwithstanding this rigorous abstinence, he was wonderfully fresh and florid for one of his age. He read without spectacles ; his hearing was good ; his teeth well preserved ; and he always appeared with exemplary promptitude at his place in the choir, and with his deep and guttural voice gave strength and vigor to the chant. His only recreation after long meditation was to beautify his little garden, wherein he cultivated the most beautiful flowers.

When he saw Ubaldo for the first time, the dear old man raised his head, which was usually bent on his chest, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, cried out :

“ I thank thee, O my God ! that thou hast granted me the grace to see, before I die, this youth of my blood, and of the house which for thy love I abandoned. Never more did I cross its threshold, but have lived alone in thy holy tabernacles, perpetually crying out to thee : ‘ How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord.’

“ My dear nephew, I bless you and bid you welcome. The Marquis di San Roberto, your grandfather and my nephew, when he was young, came every year in the month of August to see me, and remained three days in the *Forestiera*, where he was warmly welcomed by the abbot and the other monks; but your father I have never seen. Perhaps he is a man entirely of the world, and has never even named me to you, thinking me unworthy of mention; but your mother, the good Virginia, no sooner became Edward’s wife than she wrote and recommended herself to my prayers, and has since written me three or four times a year, and at the Feast of St. Romuald sent me a large basket of oranges, which were a great treat for the monks on that festival. Oh! may God bless her; I know she is bringing you up in the holy fear of the Lord, and often writes me of you and of little Irene, confiding to me her hopes and consolations.”

Ubaldo was moved to the very depths of his heart by these kind words, and promised his uncle that he would pay him frequent visits. And he kept his promise, always riding up to see him at least twice a week, at which the old monk was pleased beyond measure. He asked the abbot to grant his nephew *benedicite*, a favor which permitted him to enter his cell and remain there during Vespers and Compline, to give him some advice. Such was the consideration and esteem in which Father Romano (this was the monk’s name), who had once been their abbot, was held by the monks that this signal favor of receiving private visits from his



nephew was granted him. Ubaldo had, therefore, free access to the cloister of the hermitages, as if he belonged to the monastery. He, however, took care not to abuse the privilege, and always passed by the other cells, going straight to that of Father Romano. When he did not find him there, knowing that on a certain day their rule permitted the monks to walk and meditate in the adjoining pine forests, Ubaldo went thither, threading his way over gloomy and tortuous paths to where he usually found his great-granduncle, rapt in lofty contemplation, under the dense foliage of a larch-tree in which was placed a little shrine of Our Lady. Then, not daring to interrupt his holy meditation, Ubaldo knelt down with great devotion, and, kissing the hem of the monk's habit, returned homewards.

One day, as he was seeking Father Romano in the forest, Ubaldo found himself in a place strange to him, a sort of clearing, at one side of which he perceived a large cavern, the mouth of which was blocked up with large stones covered with ivy, lichen, and moss. A wooden cross, rudely carved, was placed on the highest and most mossy rock; the moss had grown up and encircled the arms of the rustic cross, and fell from either side of it. The young man, who had come unperceived into the meadow, saw, kneeling at the mouth of the cave, an old hermit, whose head was entirely bald and shining, and whose snow-white beard flowed down over his breast. His arms were outstretched and raised, as if in ecstacy, his eyes were fixed upon the cross, while burning tears flowed down his cheeks. He prayed aloud:

“ O sweet Cross ! that didst sustain the eternal weight of our redemption, O only hope of a perishing world ! remind Jesus of his mercies, and oppose thyself as a shield to the darts of his justice. I behold misfortunes lowering over Italy ; already I hear the thunder muttering above the ark of God ; I smell the odor of the desolating carnage which will pollute the fair fields of Italy ; I hear the neighing of chargers, the clash of arms, the thunder of artillery, the groans of the wounded, the weeping of mothers, the mourning of wives, the sighs of virgins, the affright of old men, the shock of the assault, the terror of towns and cities. Ah ! holy Cross, behold the divine blood which bathed thee ; again it is warm and smoking ; let it but flow over these hapless regions ; pour it forth in rivers and torrents. A drop, one single drop, would save the entire universe. Thou dost possess it all ; be thou, therefore, its merciful dispenser. Consider that if our sins are many and great the mercies of the Father are infinitely greater. These mercies will efface their guilt ; and while man sins let the bees roam the valleys, to suck out the sweetness of flowers, and with the honey thereof sweeten the tongue that blasphemes the divine Goodness. Let the grape hasten to grow ripe, and produce the wine which will warm and rejoice the hearts that offend their Creator. Let the flowers and fruits put forth their leaves and blossoms to delight the eyes and be savory to the palate of the rebels. Let the sun warm and brighten, and the rain water and fertilize, the fields ; let all things announce the

goodness of him who pardons all offences, and never threatens, save to lead back the wandering ; of him who long suspends his chastisements, to await for repentance. Ah ! Cross, our hope, port of salvation, anchor of safety, let me, poor miserable sinner as I am, in some sort appease the just wrath and imminent vengeance."

And, so saying, the holy anchorite bared his shoulders and scourged himself with a steel-pointed discipline, which tore his flesh and made the blood flow freely. Ubaldo, deeply moved at this sight, and filled with the deepest compunction, turned and hastened to the cell of his granduncle, who was seated in the porch of his hut, and, seeing his nephew so agitated, asked :

"Ubaldo, my dear child, what is the matter with you ? what has annoyed you ?"

The young man then related what he had seen, adding that the prayer of the old anchorite had so deeply touched him and given him so great a confidence in regard to the dangers which threatened Italy that he could not tell whether he had been more alarmed at thought of the coming evils or consoled by the prayer which the hermit had addressed to the divine justice. Don Romano was about to make some reply, when the Compline rang, and the old man only said :

"Come soon again to see me, dear child ; I wish to have a long, serious talk with you on that subject."

So saying, he arose, and, leaning on his staff, proceeded to the choir.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE GUEST.

DURING a very short period at the castle many events had taken place which were the cause of considerable agitation, and which clearly prove that every step, even the best, should be taken after due care and reflection, and not merely upon the impulse of the moment. Virginia had been deeply touched by the dreadful events which had been related by George de Berilly at the Convent of St. Ignatius. She had earnestly begged him to come and pass some time at the castle, and he had promised to come thither when he had made all necessary arrangements with his little shepherds.

When he came to the castle he was received with all possible kindness and attention, and felt that he was in a family at once noble, well-bred, and kind-hearted. All of them seemed bent on consoling him in his sadness as far as lay in their power. Every one assumed an air of cheerfulness when he was present, and all sought to make him enjoy something of the peace which he had known in the days spent with Leonore. He was never left alone, and every effort was made to occupy his time in

the pleasantest manner possible. Even Lauretta imitated Irene and Antoinette in attention to the duties of hospitality. Finding that George loved flowers and natural history, she showed him her most beautiful butterflies, divided into the different species, and her rarest birds. She taught him the best way to stuff them, and the means she used to give them a natural attitude and a graceful turn of the head, and all the arts to be employed to give them the best possible appearance.

In the centre of her little garden Lauretta had ranged all her finest plants, which she had determined to have transferred to the hot-house of her garden at Chieri, where the heat of the furnace would counteract the frosty air of Piedmont. George, who was passionately fond of flowers, never tired of admiring this beautiful collection, so well arranged, so well kept, and cared for so lovingly by Ubaldo and his two sisters.

The peaceful silence, which was the indication of a habitual calm, rarely interrupted, no longer reigned at the castle. Since the arrival of Monsieur de Berilly the aspect of the place had changed. In the morning, immediately after Mass and breakfast, the whole party mounted their horses and rode off to Lanzo, Cirié, Balangero, Front, Barbania, or Nole. The countess, who for years before had given up horseback riding, often put on her habit of crimson or purple velvet, with a large, broad-leaved hat or Scotch bonnet, and set out with them. They always returned rather late to the castle, dined, and then went to sit



in the most shady part of the garden. Thither was brought Laretta's spinet, which she played remarkably well, and Monsieur de Berilly arranged little concerts of singing and instrumental music, in which Irene played the harp, Ubaldo the lute, and he himself the flute. The countess, Antoinette, the Abbé Leardi, and several priests or other gentlemen, some of whom dined at the castle almost every day, formed the audience and admired the beauty of the voices and the sweetness of the instruments. Duets by Laretta and Irene, their trios with Ubaldo, and occasionally quartets with Antoinette, who had an admirable soprano voice, were delightful to hear. Irene sometimes played solos on the harp, or played her own accompaniments, when she sang songs so sweet that they resembled the notes of a dove flying into the air in the sublime regions of heavenly harmony. In the voices of young girls there are sounds so sweet, so pure, so delicate, so lofty, that they surpass the aerial harmony of the nightingale, lark, or thrush.

Monsieur de Berilly, who was an adept at fencing, gave Ubaldo lessons in that art, for the latter had acquired some knowledge of it from one of the most skilful swordsmen at Turin, and George amused himself by showing him all the tricks, feints, and thrusts which constitute the science of fencing. The young men usually practised in the lower halls of the castle, where hung iron gauntlets, helmets, shields, and spears. Ubaldo's courage, strength, and dexterity gave great pleasure to his professor, who admired his inde-

fatigable activity, his fine face flushed with exercise, and his beautiful hair, which fell in ringlets on his shoulders.

The gentle Countess Virginia rejoiced to see that George de Berilly had, as it were, put new life into the castle. It seemed to her that God had blessed her charity in seeking to alleviate the misfortunes of this good young man. She regarded him as an eldest son, and treated him with all the security of maternal tenderness. George, on his part, felt the liveliest gratitude towards her for the favors which she had lavished upon him, and felt it a pleasure to show her filial affection and obedience. He was always the first to reach the chapel, whither he carried Virginia's books; he attended her as she came out, always offering her his arm; he watched her every movement and gesture, studied her tastes, and sought to divine her thoughts that he might anticipate her desires; and when the conversation turned on religion, his remarks were always the most just and edifying. George, too, invariably showed the deepest respect for the good canon, who often visited the castle; and when the Capuchin Father came to hear Virginia's confession, George always saw that everything was ready, and accompanied him as far as the drawbridge, conversing of grave and religious subjects.

Virginia never lost an occasion of conversing seriously with George. She often spoke of Lauretta, Irene, or still oftener of Ubaldo, and George sympathized deeply with this maternal solicitude. He deeply pitied Virginia on account of the evil

results of Laretta's education ; he pointed out remedies and invented pious stratagems to lead her to good ; he promised to employ all the means presented by music, ornithology, and botany, and had great hopes of success. Virginia wept for joy, and regarded George as an angel sent from heaven to bring a blessing upon the house of d'Almavilla.

The countess, during the musical hour which usually followed dinner, had her eyes constantly fixed upon George's face. She followed all his movements, the impressions made upon him by the harmony and melody produced by his flute, and the clear and rapid arpeggios of the harp played by Antoinette. All this seemed to awake in Virginia's soul new emotions, vague desires, sudden tenderness, and even tears. After the concert she went alone to the chapel, where she prayed and supplicated with a trembling anguish entirely new to her heart. Poor Virginia ! be upon your guard ; you do not know the effects of compassion, pity, commiseration for t' e sorrows of any one who is near you. The heart, too, has eyes which see afar off, and the sight of which is profound, secret, mysterious. The eyes of the heart have their tears, their hidden secrets, their abysses, the depths of which human prudence cannot always sound.

Virginia, who usually did not go out in the morning, confiding her children in their walk to the care and vigilance of the Abbé Leardi, now always appeared after breakfast, modestly but ele-

gantly attired. She came down one of the first to the hall, and said to the young girls :

“Come, you are never ready.”

“Mamma, I am just trying my hat. Wait till I put in a pin. Julie has gone for my shawl. Ubaldo, do not forget the butterfly-net. Where is the little knife for mushrooms. One moment more, mamma; I want my little scissors to cut the stems.”

Virginia then walked on with George, speaking of the future of her children. When the young people had got the start of them, she continued the conversation, saying :

“My dear George, believe me, Ubaldo has an excellent heart, a fine mind, noble and elevated sentiments, and I trust he will render the young girl whom God destines for him happy. And Irene, she is a gentle, modest, pious little soul, with an extremely delicate conscience. She is well skilled in domestic duties, has learned to be charitable to the needy, and full of compassion for the woes of others. Ah! George, pray for her, that she may meet a man who will understand the delicacy of her sentiments, that he may not deal roughly with her, nor oppose her most natural and reasonable desires; a man who may not extinguish in her heart the spark of conjugal love, casting her aside, like a soiled rag, to pine in solitude, humiliation, and sorrow. She would die, die of sorrow, George; for it requires a brave, strong heart, tried virtue, and a special grace from God to love a husband who despises you, who never gives you a thought, and who does not return love for love; who says a

thing is black, if you call it white ; who finds everything which you think beautiful, hideous and disgusting ; whose fears are your hopes, whose weariness is your joy ; a husband who is saddened by his wife's smile, who rejoices in her sufferings, who contradicts her tastes and inclinations, who drives away the friends whom h's wife welcomes, and not through jealousy, but merely through a spirit of contradiction."

George listened attentively ; he sighed deeply, slackened his pace, and stopped as if to take breath, deeply touched by her sorrowful words, Virginia walked on into the woods, and never thought of the time of return. Ubaldo and the young girls ran to meet their mother, with their flowers, and strawberries, and mushrooms, but Virginia looked at all these things with an absent air, saying "yes" or "no" at random.

When they returned to the castle, she felt fatigued and cast down ; she threw herself on a sofa, while Julie took off her hat and shawl, and replaced her shoes by satin slippers. She remained motionless, without a word or glance for any one, absorbed in her thoughts, and in such a condition as Julie had never seen her in before. Suddenly rising, she went to the chapel and prayed, weeping bitter tears, and asking graces which she did not herself know. She felt a want of unburdening her heart, which seemed to her changed, consumed, as it were, with a feverish desire for some unknown want. The poor woman never asked herself the cause of all these changes. Was it tenderness, was



it compassion, or was it the fear of new misfortunes impending for George de Berilly?

“Poor Leonore,” said she, “how happy you would have been had you lived, for you would have been the wife of a good and noble man! How I envy you! You are, indeed, in heaven, happy soul! Pray to God that he may grant your George the grace to find a heart which will know how to appreciate him and make him happy.”

Such were the thoughts that continually occupied Virginia's mind, and, as these thoughts were pure, she was not on her guard against them; she mistook them for maternal solicitude, born of a simple and sincere friendship. She knew that she loved God, her husband, and her children; she never felt either doubt or perplexity; she never for an instant suspected that her heart could for a moment entertain a love outside of these loves. But she prayed, and George was always the first who came into her mind; she made her spiritual reading, and the page seemed covered with the name of George. The evening came at length. After supper the children went to bed, and the countess sat up talking to George and the professor, who was quite astonished at this change, for Virginia usually went up when the children were in bed, that she might give them her blessing.

When she at length retired to her apartments she threw herself at the foot of the bed, leaned her arms upon the quilt, and, her head buried in her hands, prayed and wept. Julie entered, went out, prepared her night-dress, arranged the clothes,

placed the night-lamp in position, and then shook up the pillows. Virginia remained with her head buried in her hands, her thoughts wandering through the windings of an unending labyrinth. Julie rattled the windows, opened and closed the bureau drawers; then she went into the dressing-room, laid out her mistress's dressing-gown, arranged everything, and returned to the room. At length, after having waited some time in silence, she saw Virginia raise her head and hastily wipe her eyes with her handkerchief, drink a little water to cool her throat, which was burning, while her heart beat and her temples throbbed violently. She began to undress mechanically. Julie assisted her in silence. Then Virginia went to bed, and her maid put away the clothes, and asked her :

“What dress will your excellency wear to-morrow?”

“Leave out the gray stockings,” answered Virginia.

Julie turned away her head, and made a gesture as if she would have said :

“What is my mistress thinking of to-night?”

As she was going out of the room, the countess called her back :

“Julie, did you put the vinaigrette of camphor in Monsieur George's room? You know he was ill yesterday.”

“I did, your excellency.”

“Did you iron his cravats?”

“Yes, your excellency.”

“Did you flute his sleeves?”

“Yes, your excellency.”

Julie kissed the countess's hand, said good night, and was about leaving the room, when she was called a second time:

“Julie!”

“Signora!”

“Will you ask Checco if Monsieur George has retired, and if his headache is gone? Poor young man, he has suffered so much. Did I ever tell you of his misfortunes?”

“Yes, signora; you told me of them several times.”

“Were they not dreadful?”

“Dreadful, indeed, signora.”

Then the countess began again to relate the misfortunes of Monsieur Berilly to Julie, who was half asleep.

Virginia's confessor, however, arrived one morning as usual. He was a friar from the convent of the Franciscan Minors, and a man of singular learning and piety, who had acquired considerable experience in the sacred ministry. He had been for several years at the Church of St. Thomas of Turin, and had been the confessor of many noble ladies, especially those of the court. He was himself of noble birth, and had entered Holy Orders while still young, attracted by the beautiful examples which he saw in the convent adjoining his estate, and where he usually went to hear Mass.

As soon as he arrived at the Castle of Lanzo he went to the chapel and took his place in the confessional, where he remained in prayer till Virginia

came and made her confession. After she had received absolution she asked the father if after Mass he would come up to her apartment, as she had some matters upon which to consult him. When Mass was over, and they had all partaken of their cup of chocolate, the priest went up to the countess, who awaited him with considerable emotion. Having asked him to be seated, she began as follows, after a long and rather confused preamble, in which she referred to some commission from one of her friends :

“Father Clemente, the lady of whom I speak told me that she is anxious for a decision from your reverence, whose wisdom, experience, and charity she appreciates, as to how she should act in a certain matter in which she has become involved. It seems to this lady that a certain particular affection has entered her heart for an excellent gentleman, full of virtue, modesty, and honor, and quite incapable of a sentiment not perfectly delicate and pure. My friend, in her turn, has always been inclined to piety, and has never admitted even the thought of a profane love to enter her heart. She loves her children with all her heart, and would not do the slightest wrong to her husband, nor withhold from him a particle of that affection which she has always borne him. Now, Father Clemente, as regards the husband, my poor friend has never had a happy moment with him, not a single one ; but, on the contrary, he has despised and tormented her from the day she became his wife. Still, father, do not fear that she will ever

forget her duties; she merely desires to put her conscience at rest as to the nature of a sentiment which she feels for a person who esteems her, understands her, and treats her with grateful respect and courtesy. It can harm no one, and, after all, the heart is free."

Father Clemente, while she spoke, kept his head bent, his hand alternately stroking his chin or passed rapidly over his forehead, as if to concentrate his thoughts, and his eyes cast down; but when Virginia uttered the startling words about a heart being free, he suddenly raised his head and looked her full in the face, raised one hand warningly, and said:

"What is that, Virginia? The heart free, the heart free! too true, it is unhappily free to save itself or to — but I will answer one by one the foolish and dangerous delusions which have found their way into your friend's deluded head."







## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE VICTORY.

AT this stern and unexpected reproach from Father Clemente, Virginia was confounded. She stopped short, grew red, cast down her eyes, and felt herself as if stunned. She seized and held to her nostrils a vinaigrette which lay beside her on the table. The monk then continued :

“ We have been for some time aware, my dear countess, that the evil spirit has inculcated a certain maxim among our ladies which has been fostered by a worldly spirit, and kept alive with the greatest solicitude by self-love. This maxim persuades them that it is allowable to think of any other person besides their husband, provided this thought be confined to hopes and desires. Of that they do not make, I will not say a matter of conscience, but not even the slightest scruple. These ladies excuse this affection, which often steals upon them unawares, by the false principle that the heart is free. If the minister of God could excuse them on the plea of ignorance, he would do so with willing heart, trusting that the Lord would not hold them guilty of sin ; but this error has precisely its germ and takes strongest root, like

tenacious ivy, in the hearts which are most enlightened and most highly gifted.

“ If we were to ask a peasant woman, or any one in the lower walks of life : ‘ Tell me, my good woman, do you think you can love any other man besides your husband ? ’ she would answer :

“ ‘ May God preserve me from such a thing ! I owe all my affection to my husband ; for if I did otherwise, it would be like, in sharing an apple, to give my husband the peeling and another man the fruit.’

“ ‘ But if you love your husband sincerely, surely you can give a little love to another.’

“ ‘ No, no ; if the heart were like a Bergamot pear, large enough to give a slice to every one, why, things might be different ; but the heart is so small that if you share it, it falls in crumbs, and none remains for either one or the other. The good priest who married me said : “ Nunziatina, be careful now ; remember you belong after this to your husband, and that in soul and body you are henceforth to be one with him.” Now, if I gave another man a little of my heart, I would do wrong, for I would take away a little of the unity. No, I am poor, but I am a Christian, and the good priest who married me knew more than any printed book.’

“ Such, my dear countess,” continued the monk, “ are poor women, one and all. They sometimes fall through human frailty, but never through false reasoning. They confess it, because they know they have committed a violation of the holiness of the

marriage sacrament. It is not so with many noble ladies, simply because of the bad novels they read, the plays at which they assist, and the wicked sentiments to which they listen all day long in their conversations ; as for example :

“ ‘ Poor woman ! her husband is a fool, a dolt, who treats her, gentle, spirituel, and delicate as she is, as if she were a mere cipher ; never a pleasant manner to her ; never a caress. Her poor heart has need of love, it has great need of love. I pity her ; she cannot live without love.’ ”

“ And so the years pass on, while she gives the finest and best portion of her heart to another love, contenting herself with not hating her husband, and treating him with the cold familiarity she gives her maid or her butler.”

The good Virginia, shocked by these considerations, said hesitatingly :

“ Oh ! no, Father Clemente ; my friend loves her husband. What, as she loves a maid ? Oh ! no ; her heart belongs to her husband ; it is his right, his property ; no one can dispute that.”

“ Virginia,” said the monk, “ tell me, if I ask a lady to whom does this sumptuous palace belong, she would answer, To my husband. Very well. And this beautiful reception-room, fitted and adorned with such beautiful carpets, wonderful mirrors, elegant paintings, pictures of the great masters, fine bronzes, vases of gold and silver, rare and precious marbles—who occupies this room ? She answers :

“ ‘ I will tell you ; it has been occupied for years by the Duke Eugene.

“ ‘ Ah ! very good. Who has possession of the apartment above ? ’ ”

“ ‘ My children. ’ ”

“ ‘ Very good. And where are your husband’s apartments ? ’ ”

“ ‘ His apartments are below ; two small rooms on the ground floor. ’ ”

“ ‘ On the ground floor ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, but he is perfectly content ; he is so good. I never let him want for any thing. He has his people, and everything belongs to him, from the roof to the foundation. ’ ”

“ ‘ Very good ; but does your husband never wish to return to the best apartments, where he lodged at first ? ’ ”

“ ‘ How would he possibly do so ? The duke is there. He is very much pleased with everything ; he says he would die if he were driven thence. ’ ”

“ ‘ Ah ! but your husband, who is the master, would he not also like to occupy them ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Bah ! bah ! politeness, father ; *les convenances*, father. You are in a cloister ; you do not know the world. How could we tell the duke, after so many years, that he must depart ? ’ ”

“ ‘ But your husband ? ’ ”

“ ‘ My husband is a brute ; the best rooms are not for him. ’ ”

“ ‘ Very good ; but you mentioned, my dear marchioness, that the palace was his. ’ ”

“ ‘ Why, of course ; every one knows that. It is his, entirely his ; no one can take it from him. ’ ”

“ ‘ Except you, because the duke is there, and

finds his quarters pleasant ; because politeness demands it.

“ So that if politeness or the usages of society required that the duke should also have the two little rooms on the ground floor, your husband would be put in the woodshed, or even in the stable. Or perhaps you would say to him : “ Dear friend of my heart, go and lodge at an inn ; for there is no place for you in the house. But the palace is yours, all yours ; set your mind at rest on that score.” ’

“ You laugh, Virginia, and that proves that in this little dialogue you perceive on one side palpable truths and on the other the greatest absurdities.”

“ Yes, indeed,” said the countess ; “ you speak most eloquently of the palace, but what of the heart ? ”

“ The heart, dear countess, is a little room of two stories which admits of only two loves. On the upper story is the love of God, which is boundless, because the upper part of the heart has no roof, and this love soars up into the infinite. In the lower chamber is conjugal love ; for although maternal love pretends to have its place, it is mingled with, or becomes a part of, conjugal love, so that it does not require a separate space. If a foreign love be admitted to the lower story of the heart, the love of God takes flight, leaving the upper portion in a dreary solitude and most appalling void.”

“ Oh ! but that is not altogether the case, Father Clemente.”



“No, eh? Of whom does the woman think, if not of her new love? She thinks of him waking, she thinks of him in her dreams, she thinks of him when alone, she thinks of him when with her husband, when at the theatre, at home, or even in church. For I will tell you, the more pious, good, and pure a woman is the more she will think of him at her prayers; for thus the devil deceives her, and multiplies her devotions that she may think this affection is holy; and thus the soul grows weak, writhes under or is consumed by a feverish delirium, like snow in the sun, or wax in a fire.

“Speak no more to her of the care of her children, of household duties, of habits, or customs, or propriety; she is absorbed in one thought which deprives her of self-control. The more she seeks to appear calm, tranquil, serene, the fiercer grows the tempest in her heart, and the more her mind becomes oppressed with a crushing weight. Sometimes she even caresses her husband with a sort of forced and extravagant gayety, to persuade herself that it is him, him alone whom she loves. She has recourse to the sacraments; she prays, she weeps, she torments herself and gives up her heart to the ardor of a fantastic fervor which she mistakes for the real piety which should regulate her affections; she does not see that all this is mingled with a subtle and infernal poison.”

“You frighten me, father.”

“Let us pray, my dear countess—pray for this poor creature. When such an infirmity mounts

from the heart to the head, the cure is difficult ; but when it descends from the head to the heart, scarcely anything short of a miracle can cure it. Hence our Saviour said: 'I do not pray for the world' (meaning i. e. false maxims); 'for the world calleth evil good, and good evil.' Virginia, the Lord is truth and the world falsehood. Let your friend be persuaded that when she loves any other but her husband she does wrong ; but if she act on the false principle that the heart is free, she is lost. And now, the peace of the Lord be with you."

"Do not go yet, father ; do not go till Virginia promises you in the name of her friend that, as you have enlightened her with heavenly light, she on her part will do all that she can to root out an affection which took her heart unawares, when perhaps she was careless in guarding the outposts. She trusts with the help of God to drive out of the little chamber all unlawful love. She hopes to place sentinels, patrols, and watchmen before it, who will permit no one to pass its threshold, nor to hold possession of what belongs to its lawful proprietor."

So saying, she knelt, asked Father Clemente's blessing, after which he departed. Meanwhile, Ubaldo was below conversing with George upon the various kinds of horses, and their care and management.

"Why, George," said Ubaldo, "you have given me so complete a picture of a fine horse that I seem to see the charger of Attila, or the fiery steed

of the angel who invested Heliodorus, of which there is a painting by Raphael in the Vatican gallery. But where would any one find such a horse as you have described. Why, I scarcely think the royal stables possess one like it."

"I have merely told you what a good horse should be ; I do not promise that you will find all those qualities united in one animal ; nature does not grant such perfection either to man or beast ; but I assure you the nature of a good horse may be improved and developed by the care of experienced persons."

Ubaldo listened to the explanation which he proceeded to give of the qualities of horses, and how much depended on the rider, till a servant came to announce that the young ladies were ready for their walk. When they reached the drawing-room, they found the Abbé Leardi, who announced that the countess, having a slight headache, would not go out. The children, who before George's arrival had always gone out with their master, paid no attention to this change, and passed on. But George wished to go at once and enquire after the countess ; but the abbé opposed his desire, saying that she had gone to superintend her women.

In higher circles of society ladies have ready for every occasion the most natural pretexts to escape from embarrassing situations, and these pretexts are so numerous and various that the aphorisms of Hippocrates and Galen are nothing in comparison, and would be quite insufficient. A slight pain in the head, a touch of cold, a tight slipper, a shade of

indigestion, the least overstraining of the nerves, or a palpitation, and a thousand other such complaints. With such little inventions do they excuse themselves from making or receiving a wearisome visit, or politely refuse a disagreeable invitation to a ball or theatre. Some ladies use them again in their little jealousies and piques and dislikes; but wise ladies use them to save themselves from certain dangers, or to bring back their heart, which has half unconscious'y strayed from the right path to the verge of a precipice.

Virginia set to work courageously, and took every means to crush at once the germ of evil which had unconsciously entered her heart, and blessed the moment when she resolved to consult Father Clemente. Such is the course of action which every prudent woman should take, if she finds herself in danger of losing her peace of heart and forgetting her duties to God. When the heart is troubled, the mind makes vain efforts to calm it by false syllogisms; but the heart will not be calmed; the more the mind reasons, the more the heart, which has its own natural and most emphatic dialect, is troubled and in pain.

Ubaldo, George, and the girls returned to the castle at the usual hour. Virginia received them cheerfully. They all chatted till dinner-time, and that meal passed off as usual amid lively conversation, principally turning on the incidents of their walk, on news received from the count, who wrote from Venice, saying that he had just returned to that Queen of the Adriatic after a short jour-

ney to Vienna. He described the feasting and pleasure of every kind to which the Venetians thoughtlessly devote their days. After dinner the concert began as usual; but Virginia no longer sat facing George; she sat with some gentlemen who had dined with them. In their evening walk she took her place quite unaffectedly between George and the abbé. Taking Laretta's arm, she rallied her on her reserved manner, which she noticed more especially of late, and said:

“ You are young and strong, and can support a greater weight than mine, for I am not quite so old and stout as to crush you like a mill-sack.”

She jestingly appealed for the truth of this remark to George, who smiled somewhat sadly, and passed it off with a graceful Parisian compliment. After supper the countess excused herself upon one of the pretexts we have mentioned, and went up with the children, leaving George to the care of the abbé. She left the room when she saw them interested in some musical discussion, or on the prognostics as to the future of Italy, the doings of the French Republicans, the troubles in La Vendée, the German alliances, or the intentions of England.

But God, who never fails to assist hearts of goodwill, while Virginia was struggling and gaining a victory in the Castle of Lanzo, brought about a fortunate circumstance which put an end to her perplexity. A friend of George, who was in the household of the Count de Provence, where he enjoyed great influence, was charged to seek out



ways and means for negotiating a secret treaty with the Venetian nobility, that the prince might be received in safety in those states which were neutral ground. It was to be desired that the republic would choose Verona, which was a beautiful town, and an agreeable place of abode, as the people were kind and hospitable, and friendly to strangers, whom they received with the greatest pleasure. This friend, who was aware of Berilly's whereabouts, wrote him, in the name of his royal highness, to set out at once for Venice, to conduct an affair so important to the highest destinies of France.

George, filled with the liveliest emotion, hastened to the countess, telling her of the mission they desired him to undertake, and asking her advice. Virginia thanked God from the bottom of her heart; but, prudent and sensible as she was in everything, she replied that she thought it necessary, before entering upon these negotiations, to inform the Prime Minister of the King of Sardinia, to whom she would give him letters of introduction, as well as to her husband, the Count d'Almavilla, who was at Venice on affairs of the state. George's friend had informed him that he would find sufficient funds at a bank in Turin. The countess directed George to her secretary, who could give him all necessary information regarding the money, and his introduction to the minister. She had a travelling carriage prepared, and desired Lauretta and the twins to have letters for their father in readiness, as this would be a good oppor-

tunity to forward them to Venice. Two days after Monsieur de Berilly took his leave, much regretted by Ubaldo and the young girls, after which he proceeded to Venice.

However, before his departure, after having thanked the countess for all her kindness, moved by a sort of chivalric sentiment, he ventured to ask her for a lock of her hair as a remembrance. The countess, hiding her emotion under an unaltered serenity of countenance, answered, smiling:

“Why, George, in a little time this hair will be white ; it would, therefore, be a singular gift, little in accordance with your youth. Since, however, you have asked me for a souvenir, you shall have one, which you will preserve, I am sure, with far greater care than if it were a precious stone of priceless value.”

She opened a little casket, and took out a gold medallion, containing an admirable and most delicate miniature of Our Lady of Sorrows. Giving it to George, she said :

“Here, my friend, here is your Mother ; in the troubles and afflictions of life, think of the anguish and bitterness of that maternal heart, and you will feel consoled and comforted in your sorrow. Farewell ! may that beloved Mother guide, protect, and save you !”



## CHAPTER XXV.

### DEATH.

A DAY or two after George's departure Ubaldo set out on horseback to pay a visit to his granduncle, Father Romano. He was curious to hear what he had to say to him when he was interrupted by the Vesper-bell on the evening when Ubaldo had seen the anchorite in the wood. Having reached the *Foresteria*, and left his horse with the groom, he passed into the cloisters, according to the permission he had received from the abbot, and soon came to his uncle's cell. Finding him neither in the garden nor in the porch, he went towards his room. As he knocked at the door he saw a lay brother, who told him Father Romano was quite unwell. The monk, however, hearing his nephew's voice, called to him to come in.

Ubaldo approached the little alcove, wherein he found his granduncle lying on his hard couch, supported by pillows. He wore his white habit, of which the belt was unfastened, and his head was covered by the cowl, which came over his face like the visor of an old warrior. His hand clasped a crucifix which lay upon his breast. At the foot of his bed hung a sweet and beautiful image of the

Mother Most Amiable (*Mater Amabilis*), who seemed to regard him with tender pity, and to inspire hope and confidence. Above the hermit's head hung a picture of St. Romuald in the Camaldole-sian hermitage, pale, emaciated, his eyes fixed upon the cross in an ec-stasy so well portrayed, that upon his countenance seemed to rest the ray of spiritual light which illumines hearts and initiates them into the eternal splendor and celestial sweetness.

When Ubaldo entered, the old soldier of the cross raised the crucifix, kissed it, and showed it to the young man. "Behold," said he, "the victorious and invincible weapon which conquers the powers of darkness. Kiss it, and then hearken to me. I am, as it would seem, slightly indisposed ; the monks believe that my malady will only last a few hours, but that is a mistake, my child. The angel has measured my days with the cord of life ; he approaches the last knot ; death is at the end ; after that, eternity, which awaits and engulfs us all. Ubaldo, eternity is one ; yet on one side it plunges us in'o an abyss of tears and terror ; on the other it ushers us into a fathomless and shoreless ocean of infinite joy and of endless felicity. Strive, dear nephew of my heart, to make sure of eternity. On one side is perdition, on the other life, and both one and the other are everlasting.

"I remember the deep emotion awakened in your heart by the ardent prayer of Father Hilario, at the foot of the cross in the woods, that God might avert the thunders of his justice from Italy. I remember also having said that I had serious re-

flections to make to you upon that subject.\* My child, you delayed coming for some time, but you are still in time. I am very weak, but I will endeavor as far as possible to remove from your mind a grave error, which in many cases increases from day to day till it becomes fatal to human souls. Infidel philosophers have no greater desire than to preach to modern civilization that the existence of nations depends entirely on the continual working of the intellect and the hands; that without this exterior labor society would become a putrid corpse.

“When the world appeared more material, in what modern philosophers call the ‘iron age,’ it was in reality more spiritual than it is to-day, when the soul means ether, blood and nerves. The world of the middle ages, which seems so heavy and dull, granted the soul the sublime heritage with which God endowed it when he created it to his own image and likeness, and at that time prayer was so efficacious that it sustained and saved the world.

“Those ages which are called by the foolish wisdom of our day the ‘iron ages’ were rather ages of pure gold shining brightly before the eternal truth. The world then was peopled with monks, who from this place of exile cried incessantly towards the Lord to appease his wrath and obtain the abundant fruits of his redemption.

\* We earnestly beg our readers to note the *great truth* here developed by the hermit. This truth, properly applied, might save the world, which every day seems to approach nearer the abyss of its final ruin.



These sentinels of Israel, from midnight until dawn, and from the rising to the setting of the sun, raised their voices under the vaulted arches of the temples of God.

“ Their voices rose perpetually, first from caverns in times of persecution, then from the Theban deserts and from those of Palestine in the happy days of the monks and anchorites of the Orient. Later these hermits passed into the West, under the guidance of the patriarch Benedict, and spread themselves over all the kingdoms of the Franks, Saxons, and Teutons. When in Spain and her islands the monasteries were demolished by the Moors, these monks were obliged to fly into the most northerly countries of Europe, borne thither as the seed which eagles bear upon their wings and transport into the most inaccessible places, where the foot of man can never reach. Then Scandinavia, Friesland, Denmark, the frozen regions of the Goths, Swedes, and Sarmatians, were full of monasteries ; hymns rose day and night to heaven, and changed those wild and savage countries into a paradise of human angels, who, like the four beasts of Ezechiel, had all their eyes upon the Lord. Continually flapping their wings, they flew rapidly, each after his own fashion, wherever they were led by the impetuous flame of the Holy Spirit. While rude, mail-clad knights, armed with the sword and lance, battled amongst themselves, pursuing and assailing each other, or besieging strong castles in gloomy gorges, the monks, under their vaulted arches of the temples of God, raised innumerable

voices in pious canticles to the Lord, and begged of God grace and mercy for the sins of men.

“Every cave, every cleft in the rock had its anchorite, and no place, howsoever wild or rugged, but had its angelic hermit who invited the eagles, the lions, the dragons, and the serpents to praise their Creator and exalt his mercies. In the Black Forest, of which the dark pines cover a vast extent of the German Empire; in the forest of Ardennes, which borders the Meuse; in the deep woods of Great Britain, Bohemia, Moravia, Thuringia, and Italy, stood amid the densest and most sombre foliage, monasteries of either men or women, with their long cloisters, their immense enclosures surrounded by high walls, their high towers, their majestic churches; and in every cloister, on an average, a thousand religious, who replaced each other constantly during the day and night, that their prayers, or, as they expressed it, *laus perennis*,\* might continually arise before the throne of God.

“Hell, which saw itself baffled and overcome by their prayers, made war on the contemplative orders, and God, in his vengeance, permitted them to be suppressed in those nations which he wished to punish, and which he thus deprived of these powerful giants who stayed his arm as the sword of his vengeance was about to fall upon the heads of the impious. Hence you see, my Ubaldo, that England, Scotland, Holland, Scandinavia, Sweden, Norway, Northern Germany, and other countries

\* Perpetual praise.

which closed up monasteries and drove the monks from their shores, have cast down the walls of bronze that rose strong and polished between them and the strokes of divine justice ; and, therefore, there is little hope that they will ever return to truth and justice, the pillars upon which the edifice of a people's happiness rests."

Here Ubaldo interrupted the zealous hermit, who in the heat of his discourse forgot his weakness, saying :

" Dear uncle, I have read that the monks who sing psalms in the choir do so most of the time mechanically and without devotion, and are idle and useless in the world, while the orders who lead an active life are much more useful in our times than contemplatives."

" My dear child, that is just the language of our modern philosophers, who consider nothing of any value but what is of material use. But listen and judge for yourself, for though you are young, you seem to have a clear, sound judgment. In the first place, I ask if our accusers have that light which is necessary to read the interior of souls, and which they would require to discover, whether monks sing psalms mechanically or not. You know God grants such light to no one, much less to your philosophers. But granted even that many of the monks are distracted, and that their thoughts wander, we must regard the vivifying spirit of the Church, the immaculate spouse of the Lamb, which unites the vocations of the different monastic rules, to give to God incessant praise,

singing to him the words which he himself dictated to David to be accompanied by the organ and psaltery. Distraction is accidental, and a part of human frailty ; but the words modulated in the chant are holy and divine, and glorify God in his militant Church upon earth.

“ In the second place, I will say that those who call the monks idlers forget that to them civilization is in great part due. When they reproach them with idleness they condemn themselves. Whence come such reproaches ? From Protestant England, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, which were civilized by the monks, who brought them faith, morals, doctrine, and the arts. Reading the history of the civilization of the northern nations, it is evident that it is the fruit of the toil and industry and the learning of the monks. This is a fact which the most enlightened Protestants cannot deny without denying the most authentic history of their country.

“ This also answers in part the third objection as to the greater utility of active orders. The monks who sing in the choir and meditate in their cells have often united contemplation with the apostolate, as the mixed orders do nowadays ; but, believe me, God did not desire that all orders in his Church should be either contemplative or active. He willed that they should be alternate ; thus from the monks he desired the singing of psalms in the midnight, at dawn, and at even, and of priests meditation, learning, ardent zeal, an apostolic soul, and the courage of the missionary in crossing seas

and dwelling among barbarous and savage nations, with the cross in their hands and the name of Jesus Christ in their mouths.

“ My dear child, in our own days, France, rebelling against her God and her king, has driven forth the religious orders from the kingdom, and has thus deprived herself of her best means of atoning for the excesses she is committing. I fear that this terrible affliction will also fall upon Italy. Her ancient monasteries, which have sustained the fury of the Vandals, Goths, and Lombards, and have beheld so many cruel and perverse centuries pass over their heads ; her abbeys, founded in the early times by a Romuald, a Bruno, a John Gualberti, a Bernard, a William, or a Norbert, where these holy men gathered together such armies of monks, or of pure virgins, to sing incessantly the praises of the Lord, now await the thunders of human impiety which would crush and destroy them.”

At these words Father Romano closed his eyes and let his head fall upon his breast. His brow contracted, and he sighed deeply, as if his soul were troubled by gloomy presentiments and dark visions of the future. After a pause, he resumed :

“ What would the world be without prayer ? In the great ages of faith warriors grew weary of the combat ; tyrants overcome by remorse ; lords and dukes and crowned kings tore themselves away from tournaments and jousts, and all the pomp and splendor which surrounded their thrones, to hasten into cloisters, where they lived in prayer



and begged God, in the chanting of psalms, to show them his redemption. In our days it would be a disgrace and a reproach for one of the great ones of the earth to retire into this sweet and holy solitude and pass therein the remainder of his days. Listen, Ubaldo. I behold one of our kings, who a few years hence will desire to pass into the shadow of the holy places to pray for the welfare of his subjects, and will be opposed by the political pride of the great ones who surround his throne, who will not suffer him to clothe himself with the mantle of the poverty of Christ. But he will persevere in his holy design, he will consecrate himself to God. The history of the monarch will be silent upon the subject, and on the mausoleum erected over him they will disdain to clothe his statue in the religious habit in which he was buried, and in which he will shine in heaven; but the statue will wear the uniform of a soldier and the mantle of a king, to trouble his holy shade and that of the saintly queen, his wife."\*

The monk ceased speaking, and soon after dismissed Ubaldo.

Three days after the young man again rode up to Father Romano's cell, and found him at the point of death. The monks were kneeling round his bed, and, holding lighted tapers, read the prayers for

\* Those who when in Rome visit the Church of San Andrea, at the Quirinal, to admire the beautiful elliptic of Bernino, and the superb columns of jasper and other precious marbles with which the church is adorned, turning towards the end *in cornu evangelii*, will see that the monk's prophecy was fulfilled.

the dying. He was as white as snow. His eyes, which shone with a calm and peaceful light, were raised to heaven with an expression of ardent love, or rested sweetly and gently upon his beloved brethren, bidding them a last farewell. The old monk recognized Ubaldo, and signed for him to approach. He laid his hands upon the head of the kneeling youth, and spoke in a voice which was feeble, but at the same time clear and distinct, saying :

“ You see, my dear child, I am dying. The years which I have spent in fasting, silence, and prayer have passed ; but more rapidly and less happily pass the years of the profane children of this world. Eternity awaits me. And do you believe, my Ubaldo, I would have died more calmly or more confidently in a palace than here under the wing of the goodness of God, within his holy tabernacle ? ”

As he ceased speaking his hands rested heavily upon Ubaldo's head, he drew one deep sigh, seized and kissed the crucifix, and his agony began. A priest read the “ Depart, Christian soul,” sprinkled him with holy water, placed his stole upon his breast, and held the crucifix to his lips. Just as they touched the sacred wound in the side, the source of all hope, the soul fled. The father abbot closed his eyes and the monks chanted the “ De Profundis.” Then one of them brought Ubaldo back to the Foresteria, where, still weeping, he mounted his horse and returned to the castle, full of new and fervent thoughts.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE REPUBLIC OF VENICE AND THAT OF AMERICA.

IN our opinion, none of the ancient or modern nations have had a youth like to that which has invigorated the robust members of the American Republic, nor an old age like to that which enfeebled and consumed the Republic of Venice. Whereas the Americans grew to maturity without childhood or youth, the Venetians spent their old age in dancing, laughing, beguiled by rosy cheeks, the sweet strains of music, convivial pleasures, and in unrestrained mirth like a young and happy bride.

With America nature constantly employed the same care with which she forms young and undeveloped bodies. In the first place she formed their constitution, strengthened the muscles, hardened the bones, expanded the chest, bestowed a herculean neck, a firm foot, strong arm, a brave and dauntless heart, good internal organs, piercing sight, quick ear, clear, sonorous voice, fresh complexion; making it altogether bright, fearless, daring, and full of cheerfulness and gaiety. Then came the nob'ler gift of mind, intelligence, spirit, to crown this material strength; genius cultivated by the abstract sciences, a heart refined to that gen-

tleness which has its germ in the gardens of science, of *belles lettres*, and of the fine arts.

Scarcely had America gained her liberty than her deserts began to give place to houses and gardens ; immense cities, towns, and rich and fertile fields arose as if by magic on the coasts of the Atlantic and on the banks of rivers. The fields were filled with herds and flocks of sheep and cattle, the barns were stocked with grain, and the finest and most delicious fruits everywhere abounded.

The Americans, who do not like delays, at first built in their colonies great houses and barns and shops of wood. As is usual in any place where many people live, sudden fires often caught in these structures, and one night sufficed to reduce to ashes the finest portions of these new cities ; but a few months sufficed also to build houses, shops, or barns finer, larger, and better than before. The colonists went to work more tranquilly and with less ado than we would make in planting a vine or an apple-tree.

Occasionally fires were kindled in various directions among the forests of oaks, pines, or cedars, which with their dense foliage covered immense tracts of country. These fires sometimes lasted months, and raged with such violence, producing such dreadful smoke and flame, and accompanied by such a roaring noise, that it seemed to ascend to the very heavens and obscure the rays of the sun. But it left the place clear, though covered with ashes ; then they ploughed it up, fertilized the land, and sowed seed ; grain sprang up almost miracu-

lously, and the people, finding that they had a superfluity thereof, sent laden ships to sea bearing grain to be sold to the older settlers of South America.

Then ports and wharves were improvised to permit the entrance of European vessels, and these ports became places of commerce, wealth, life, and soul, even for the cities which communicated with the sea, and transported their merchandise by the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Potomac, and St. Lawrence.

Old Europe, impoverished in almost all her ports by wars and other causes, by oppression, the thirst for liberty and for wealth, set sail from Ireland, Scotland, England, Germany, Flanders, and Holland, to the shores of the New World—Canada, New England, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Florida—which they populated; Thence they discovered new countries. Explorers penetrated into the forests of Kentucky, Nevada, and far beyond Louisiana to Texas and the interminable western lands of Oregon, and by the Red River to California. These adventurous colonists landed at New York, Boston, Kingston, or at some other American port or harbor, and unloaded their carts or their vessels, their oxen, cows, or horses, and began to sow seeds and plant vegetables, while with their families they encamped under carts covered with canvas tents; thus they traversed the desert regions, and purchased lands at a nominal price from the American Government, which they now possess with fewer restrictions and greater independence than any proprietor in Europe.



Europe, in its soft and luxurious civilization, could not form an idea of the brave and constant endurance of the American migrating to new territories, seeking a home for himself and his children. The Government of the United States gives to every citizen who settles in the territory of Oregon a hundred and twenty acres of virgin land at his choice, which he can cultivate and fertilize at his will. If he requires more, he can procure it for, at the most, a dollar an acre.

The colonist journeys along the Eastern borders of the republic, and then towards the West, and traverses immense prairies, deep valleys, steep elevations, high peaks, and swamps, where he sinks in the rich, marshy earth ; he crosses great and rapid rivers, arriving on the opposite shore with all his goods and chattels, his horses and oxen swimming across with great danger and fatigue ; and before reaching his destination he has to overcome ten times greater obstacles than these.

The voyager is surprised by night. He throws on his clothes, dripping wet as it often happens, raises as best he may his tent, which he surrounds with saddles, yokes, and carts, that the bears and wolves who scout the forests and prairies may not attack him. He lights great fires to dry his clothes, warm himself, cook his supper, and keep off wild beasts, who are afraid of fire. If the earth, as often happens in those woody regions, be infested with venomous reptiles, which are called rattlesnakes, he dares not trust to the shelter of a tent ; he then makes all his people sleep in hammocks which he

swings from the branches of trees, and these hammocks of bark are sometimes so large and solid that they easily contain a mother and her whole family.

The dawn of a new day brings him new dangers and fatigues. He meets savage tribes. If they are hostile, he seeks to avoid them ; if they are friendly, as most frequently happens, the emigrant trades with them. For game, or sugar obtained from the bark of certain trees, he gives them in exchange some nails, a knife, a fragment of a looking-glass, a little brandy, or sometimes an old shirt, a woman's hat, a pair of breeches, or a vest, all of which latter are immediately donned by the natives.

Monsignore Miega, who a short time since visited the tribe of Osage Indians, saw two of the chiefs approaching to meet him, who, it seems, had obtained from some colonis's who passed through Oregon a pair of breeches, which they divided in two, and appeared before his lordship, one wearing the left leg and the other the right. One of the great sachems had a woman's old hat on his head, another a round jacket, which he wore with ineffable gravity ; at which sight, his lordship told us at Rome, he could not avoid laughing.

Finally, after five or six months of such arduous journeying, the settler comes to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. And now indeed we see exemplified the wonderful energy and courage of the American. Undismayed by the sight of these inaccessible mountains, he proceeds on his way with his oxen and horses, to whose feet he affixes iron spikes, and in fine manages to cross those rugged

mountains, at times descending into precipices by a gradual descent from peak to peak, till he reaches the depths of wild and solitary valleys. Thus, with indescribable toil and fatigue, he travels a few miles a day, but the place of destination is beyond other mountains, other heights, other valleys, and he braves them all. At the end of about seven months of fatigue and hardship which are beyond our imagination, he arrives at the place where he is to make his home.

Once arrived, his ardor is not abated. He begins by clearing a place where his family are to settle. Trees are torn up and a site is chosen for his dwelling. The spot is marked out, the walls of a log-hut arise speedily ; it is roofed in with branches and the bark of trees ; the crevices and holes in the wall are stopped up with clay ; a fire-place is formed of a hard baked earth or stone ; the mattresses are laid on pine logs ; the kitchen utensils are brought forth, and lo ! he is installed like a king.

Oregon consists of broad prairies, alternating with dense forests, by which it is surrounded, and the colonist has, therefore, his holding securely shut in. Without the enclosure are copious streams, on the banks of which stands his dwelling, and with the water therefrom he fertilizes the soil. Then he labors, sows, ploughs, and his grain springs forth from the virgin soil, yielding him a hundredfold, the worthy and well-merited recompense of his toils and fatigues, courage and constancy. A few years since the Government of the United States opened a road across these inter-

minable regions. The steep and rugged mountains of which we have spoken have been since so intersected by roads that the traveller in crossing them is no longer exposed to the deadly perils and innumerable hardships which formerly attended the passage. In the western portions of the Republic the deserts will soon give place to cultivated fields and the forests to populous and flourishing cities, enriched by commerce and the arts.

Such is the activity of her people that the United States is intersected in all directions by more than seventeen thousand miles of railroad. The rest of the world together does not contain as much. Wherever water can be brought, canals of immense size are formed, by turning rivers, streams, and torrents from their course; and heavy-laden vessels sail upon these canals. In America there is no such thing as distance.

All the difficulties which I have mentioned, and especially the length and the hardship of journeys, do not frighten Americans. When they learn that the rivers of California, or certain lands or rocks, contain gold, they rush eagerly thither, and collect in greater numbers than quail or snipe, till these countries of gold-mines are quickly covered with tents and huts. The gold is taken from the beds of rivers and streams, or from subterranean excavations, whence they bring forth lumps of ore. Some become rich; others have much difficulty in making the two ends meet; others, and they are the most numerous, lose their time and their life in seeking for gold.

Other and more daring spirits leave the Californian gold, and the gold-diggers and miners, and penetrate into the frozen regions of the far North on whaling expeditions; or to chase the bison or the polar bear. The learned and indefatigable Count Francesco Miniscalchi, of Verona, was the first Italian who gave us the exact planisphere of the most recent polar discoveries concerning the Arctic Circle. The mind is astounded, nay, more, appalled, at the idea presented to it by these northern seas, with their tremendous glaciers, forming isolated islands, and at the consideration that amid these dread solitudes the adventurous Americans spend entire months in pursuit of sea-monsters, some of which are of such enormous size that the whaler can stand erect and walk to and fro in their mouths and between their jaws without touching the palate of the monster with his head. There, upon the awful glaciers on those inhospitable shores, enshrouded in the dense and frozen mists, these men light their fires of charcoal, which they bring with them on their sledges, and cook some slices of the oily flesh which constitutes their food. They sleep upon the ice, wrapped in the skins of bear or bison. Such a picture chills our blood, especially when we consider that in those rigorous latitudes the atmosphere goes down to forty-three degrees Réaumur.

The efforts of the Americans have since been turned to the western part of the continent, where their vigor and activity, like the blood around the heart, is concentrated. The port of San Francisco, shortly before a mere village or town, is now a



free port, full of life and bustle, her harbor crowded with vessels from Oceanica, Polynesia, Malay, China, and Japan. The circular bay which leads to the harbor is surrounded by shores which in some places are bold and rocky, and in others flat and marshy, and the Americans have driven piles into the water, upon which are built the wharves and warehouses. Hence whole streets, as it would seem, are traversed in boats, reminding one of another Venice.

About the centre of the wharf stood a sumptuous edifice, four stories high, used for a gambling-saloon. The building was of wood, and so elaborately painted and decorated that it seemed fairly to shine in the sun from the roof to the foundations. Within everything corresponded with, or even exceeded, the exterior ornamentation. Nothing was to be seen but rich Persian carpets, hangings of finest silk, furniture and ornaments of ebony, sandal, and rosewood, bright and well polished; the rich draperies hung with such grace and elegance, the cornices and frescoes were so elaborate, that one would imagine himself entering the apartments of an emperor. From every quarter of the earth were here collected the choicest viands, the finest and most exhilarating wines, rarest liquors and cordials from Italy, France, England, and Spain. Behind this palace were gardens laid out with flower-beds and parterres, pavilions and little temples, where the most fragrant and delicious plants perfumed the air, which was kept cool and fresh by the constant playing of miniature

fountains. Here numbers of men assembled to drink, smoke, and talk over commercial and political affairs. The apartments of this palace were decorated with works from the pencils of the first modern French artists. At night hundreds of gas-jets were lit, causing it to shine like the midday sun.

In the principal gambling-hall above were large tables of ebony or ivory, ornamented with delicate carvings in gilt bronze, and upon these tables was the fatal wheel used in the game of *roulette*. The players surrounded the table; heaps of gold dazzled the eyes of the hapless votaries of the play, who perceived nothing around them but the gold, which, as a magnet attracts steel, fascinated them, and they emptied their purses upon the board. Many obstinate gamblers lost in a single night all that they had won in six months, or which they had brought with them from Europe.

And while these unfortunate men thus lost every farthing that they possessed, a fine orchestra or a beautiful chorus filled the apartment with its delightful harmony, mingled too often with the blasphemies, groans, and lamentations, the grinding of teeth, and the stamping of feet by the losers.

Among these scenes of horror were to be observed dancing-girls, performing various fantastic dances, singing ballads, or throwing flowers in handfuls among the spectators; in another corner of the room some one performed on the harp, or another on the melodeon, or yet another on the

Spanish guitar. In other portions, a troop of young Indian girls danced an Indian dance, or a Neapolitan clown, Venetian juggler, or Roman wrestler amused a group of spectators.

Accidentally, or, as some supposed, by the work of an incendiary, this temple of luxury was burned to the ground some years ago. In a few hours its splendor and its varied allurements had alike disappeared. Had such a thing occurred in Europe, the laments of the proprietor would have been heard on every side, declaring himself a ruined man, with great wringing of hands and tearing of hair. In San Francisco, on the site of the former edifice, stood an American with hands behind his back, coolly regarding the great heap of ruins, and conversing with an architect or master mason, disputing about prices, and calculating the quantity and quality of materials required for its reconstruction. Meanwhile, men went and came; the fire was totally extinguished and the ruins cleared away; and while the earth was yet warm an immense canvas pavilion was erected, wherein the apartments were richly decorated with silk and damask, mirrors and gildings; and by the evening of the next day the gambling-saloon was reopened, the musicians, jugglers, and dancers had returned, refreshments were abundantly supplied, the people came as usual, and the roulette went on as if nothing had occurred.

While everything was being conducted in the most orderly manner possible, without ladders were being posed, planks were being brought, and the

pavilion was soon encircled by an immense scaffolding. In less than two months the first story was completed. At the end of three the whole edifice was rebuilt, handsomer, richer, more sumptuous than before, and the proprietor made, with interest, the hundred thousand dollars or more which he had lost.

But more wonderful still! eight months after a second fire again reduced the place to ashes, and in less than six months more it was again rebuilt, more magnificently than ever before. This second time the exterior of the building was entirely covered with plates of iron, which presented a very fine appearance, being elaborately ornamented with carvings and gildings, and the whole painted in such vivid colors that it fairly shone in the sun.\*

Upon the piles which sustain the wharves and warehouses of the city immense stones and fragments of rocks, secured by a strong cement, form solid foundations, on which are erected fine buildings of brick or stone, covered with iron plates, so arranged that, in case of fire, water could be made to play freely upon them from top to bottom, and thus prevent the iron from melting in the intense heat of the fire.

The American Government, not content with its maritime possessions on the Atlantic, proceeded towards the Pacific Ocean upon the western shores, and sought to gain control of all the

\* These anecdotes and other information have been given us by the kindness of Father Accolti, a Jesuit, who recently returned from San Francisco.

Eastern trade, concurring for that purpose with England. There is no doubt of the ultimate success of this undertaking. Now her vessels set sail from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, or other Atlantic cities, and proceed to the island of Cuba, cruise around the Gulf of Mexico, and thence to the Caribbean Sea. They sail up the San Juan River, by steamer, to the port of Castillo. Arrived there they unload their cargo, which is transported across the stony bed of the river, where other steamers are in waiting, to bring it to where the San Juan meets Lake Nicaragua, which is traversed in its fullest extent by navigators, till they reach the strip of land that separates them by little more than twelve miles from the Pacific Ocean. Steamers in waiting there take the men and their merchandise, and bring them thence to the Californian port of San Francisco. In twenty days at farthest Americans from New York or Boston can land in Upper California, where they embark and proceed directly to China, which they reach in twelve days. The reader may indeed believe that there are no wings of any dove whatsoever, real or imaginary, to be compared to the rapidity with which an enterprise is conceived and carried out by Americans, who now scour the Chinese waters from the Sea of Lama to Camboges, and consequently more than five thousand Chinese now have shops or counting-houses in San Francisco. When the Government of the United States makes the Californian ports the emporium of trade with the East, this emporium will be the universal bazaar



or market for the importations from Japan, Corea, China, the Molucca, Marianne, and Philippine Islands, Farther India, Java, the Malay Archipelago, and the Isles of Lunda, surpassing the most perilous and important enterprises of the English navigators, and bearing away rich cargoes of silk, spices, and the precious fabrications of those countries, which form the rental and retinue of the state, and thus dispute and divide the English commerce, which is the groundwork of support to that flourishing empire. Supposing even that the English became masters of Egypt, and that the Isthmus of Sucz and the port of Berenice were to fall into their power, yet with all the speed of their great steamers, running to Hong Kong, Ceylon, and Calcutta, by the Red Sea to Suez, and the Mediterranean Sea to London, they could never equal the Americans in velocity, so that two voyages of an English vessel would occupy the same time as three American trips. Here, then, is the great gate of the East opened to America, which has extended her commerce along the Pacific coast, and engaged in trade with Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chili, Valparaiso and Santiago ; on the Atlantic seaboard with Mexico, the Antilles, Venezuela, Brazil, and the Argentine Republic ; in a word, from Boston to Buenos Ayres, which forms the two great extremes of America, from east to west. Havre can be reached from New York in a fortnight ; Europe, therefore, receives merchandise from the East a full month sooner by way of America than by way of England. It is transported very speedily by Bordeaux into

Portugal, Spain, the Canaries, and Cape Verd on the south, by the German Sea on the north, which gives the Americans complete control over the Eastern trade, and the boundless wealth which in the past had been divided between Portugal, Spain, and Holland.

The hopes of the Republic of America have already in great part become a reality which astonishes the world, and must hereafter give to that active and commercial nation a miraculous impulsion. The States of the Union, which a comparatively short time ago were only thirteen, are now more than thirty in number, and all vigorous and flourishing, with deep and spreading roots, extending their strong branches from east to west in imitation of the sun, and with astonishing power and solidity. The most prosperous nations of the earth, before they had become great by reason of conquest, commerce, and navigation, beheld many centuries pass over their heads. America, in virtue of her Constitution, which leaves the laws to the general Government, and grants to States, counties, cities, and families the right of taking part in all public or private enterprises, has in a few years grown and attained to such extraordinary power that the older nations regard her with astonishment and amaze, as a prodigy in the history of the human race.

By every means in her power America seeks to induce Europeans to emigrate to her country. She flatters them by the tempting bait of freedom, the facility of attaining wealth, the prospect of

having large possessions, gaining prominence as a citizen, being perfectly free, without taxes, or tolls, or customs, or extraordinary imposts of any sort. Every one there, she says, undertakes what he pleases at his own risk and peril. People journey from one end of the States to others with incredible rapidity. They multiply the number of their cattle, or increase their possessions, or invest their capital. No one will interfere with you; no one will contradict you; you can live in solitude; you will not be, however, forced to leave the populous cities.

If you like the sea, you can go to the sea; if forests please you, you can find a tranquil shelter in their depths; according to your pleasure, you can choose plain or mountain for your abode; you will be, in a word, the absolute master of your person and your fortune. If you have money, command what you please; if you have no money, work, beg, dig, saw, or chop, and you can live. In America there are no idlers nor cowards; the weak or worthless do not make fortunes; there all is life and spirit, fire and flame, lightness and agility, courage and energy. Wisdom acts first and disputes afterwards; first comes what is good, then what is better.

As long as America continues firm and constant in the broad path of her vigorous youth, she will have a great and noble existence, strong as a lioness, soaring like an eagle above the older nations. But if she fall ill, woe to her; amid all her strength lurks many dangerous and fatal distempers, which, if occasion offer, will kill her with a

sudden blow. Nothing here on earth is immortal ; but there are nations which fall little by little, others vanish like a shadow, borne away by mighty torrents, which engulf them in their whirlpools, as it happened in the case of Venice, which in twenty-four hours was swept away after four thousand years of glorious supremacy, and disappeared like the light of a pure waxen taper, which a breath extinguishes, leaving neither sparks nor smoke nor odor.

Many have thought that the fall of the Venetian Republic had mysterious causes, and, like anatomists who dissect the body of a great man who died a sudden death, they examine the brain and the heart, the lungs and intestines, the arteries and the nerves, the jugular vein and the back-bone, by which intimate researches they lose themselves in a labyrinth of conjectures as to the primary cause of this sudden death, declaring it to be the lungs, the stomach, the brain, the nerves, and some even a worm gnawing at the vitals.

When we read the comments of historians on the fall of Venice, we find that some attribute it to old age, to debility of the nerves and muscles of this great body, and so on through a list of probable causes, but none have thought of the destroying worm which we have mentioned. Venice was a maritime power, and her harbors were stocked with men-of-war. Her treasury contained a vast amount of wealth. She had many rich and powerful families in her dominions ; an active trade, an unimpeachable credit in all the banks of Europe,

wise laws, skilful and experienced men who directed her councils, her administration, her government, or among her diplomats. She possessed an exceedingly fertile soil, flourishing cities, well-provisioned fortresses, brave men, who were ardent supporters of the republic, and she had, above all, full and entire authority over her people, who had a boundless confidence in her and a deep respect and affection, which proceeded from their veneration for the nobility, which they knew to be wise and just.

Why, that is wonderful, statesmen will tell me, but you do not speak of that worm which, in your opinion, gnawed at that ancient commune, so rigorous in its laws, institutions, and customs, and which fell ill because of the soft, voluptuous, and effeminate civilization that consumed her, as a moth is consumed by the flame which attracts, amuses, and charms it, till it has singed its graceful and brilliant wings. He who observed the last years of the republic saw it carelessly swimming, as it were, in luxury and pleasure. He saw her people spend whole nights in the saloons or places of entertainment, under the *procuratie*, sipping Turkish coffee, or the finest liquors, ices, and sherbet; or eating delicious confectionery, to the music of violins, guitars, mandolins, violoncelli, and flutes; or to delightful singing which charmed the ear and cheered the heart. He saw masked promenaders in couples on the Piazza di San Marco, or on the Quay Degli Schiavoni, eating all kinds of dainties or early fruits; the great patrician ladies,



holding in their hands, on vine or fig-leaves, bunches of cherries, sugar-pears, figs sweet as honey ; later in the season, grapes of different species, and devouring these delicious fruits as they walked through the street, a thing which, with us, is only done by the lowest classes. The music of harps or guitars followed the ladies everywhere ; here an improvisatore, there some one declaiming verses from Tasso ; and thus the quay Degli Schiavoni was a sort of perpetual fair all night.

All these things showed, it is true, a people free, gay, and contented with themselves, who lived under the wing of a paternal government, protected by good laws, shielded by justice, amid all the pleasures of wealth ; a people who slept on the softest of pillows, on a bed of rose and jasmine leaves, who thought not of the morrow, because the morrow would dawn happy, prosperous, bright as its eve ; who feared not thieves, because there were none who coveted their purse ; who had forgotten the names of sedition, tumult, rebellion, strife, or war ; who obeyed, because his serene highness has spoken, who said the *Consiglio des Diese* \* willed it thus, and thus it must be. If the state inquisitors promulgated an ordinance in the Dogado, the whole Dogado trembled as if it had heard the sound of the last trumpet on the Judgment Day. If *Missier Grande* (the sheriff of the town) appeared to the assembled people on the square, wearing his cap adorned with the sequin

\* We presume this to mean the Council of Ten, but leave it as in the original Italian.

of St. Mark, the people pros rated themselves, like the Chaldeans of old, to the statue of Nabuchodonosor. These things were good, say politicians, because they prevented innovations in the state, but they were, nevertheless, the indications of a people who had lost their ancient vigor.

But, continue they, the Venetians during the course of the last century may have had some of those internal disorders of which you have spoken; disorders which enfeeble, and at the same time envenom, till they usually result in sudden death. These continual amusements and that life of constant excitement may have been accompanied with morbid maladies which at last struck her down suddenly, while the people were giving themselves up to pomp and festivity exceeding even that of courts. Nor have we spoken of their palaces in the city on the banks of the great canal, the Regio Canal, the *Giudecca*, and others of that noblest of cities, which in truth resembled rather imperial dwellings than those of private individuals. But the greatest wealth and luxury of the Venetians were in their villas beside the Brenta, in Trivigliano, Bassanese, Vicentino, in the territories of Padua and Verona, where the Venetian lords combined the luxury and profusion of Asia, the magnificence of Constantinople and Damascus, the gallantry of Paris, the grandeur of Vienna and Madrid, the pride and ostentation of the English.

They had in these palaces galleries of statues and pictures; Oriental and African marbles of the rarest description; arches, pillars, porticos, ter-

paces, and gardens filled with exotic plants and flowers, fountains, springs, antique ruins, parks, aviaries, and lawns of indescribable beauty. Retinues of liveried servants wearing the finest French cloth covered with gold and silver, lackeys with heron plumes, footmen in velvet knee-breeches and silk stockings, with gold buckles on the shoes; waiting-women, maids, nurses, washer-women, lace-makers, and embroiderers, formed a perfect army.

The out-buildings were filled with hounds, pointers, setters, rabbit-dogs, water-dogs, shepherd-dogs. On the Brenta were the gondoliers and purveyors bringing provisions for the table and larder from Padua and even from Venice. There were head-cooks, and assistant-cooks, and scullions, and cellarers, and carvers, and butlers, and stewards. The stables contained thirty, forty, or sometimes sixty carriage and saddle horses, all of the finest quality. Some of the nobles fancied bay horses, others preferred black, others dappled horses, which every afternoon they drove with their phaetons, sometimes driving four couples; or as we have even seen them, driving eight or nine couples, that is, sixteen or eighteen horses superbly caparisoned and ornamented with beautiful plumes.

These were, however, the least causes of outlay, when we consider the dinners, concerts, banquets, balls, suppers, and hunts. Friends, relatives, associates, arrived every day from Padua, Vicenza, Mes're, Mirra, Dolo, or Venice. Exactly as in

a court, the palace doors were always open ; there was a standing table ; apartments always prepared ; and frequently there were fifty or more invited guests in the palace with their horses and servants. The table was, of course, supplied with every possible delicacy, the finest imported wines, and liquors of every price. Then, when they rode out to the hunt there was a perfect army of dogs, horses, huntsmen, carriages, and baggage, especially when ladies attended, then silk pavilions of the utmost magnificence were erected. These lords had their spring villas and their autumn villas and their summer villas. And now they are completely in the power of the Jews, money-lenders and usurers, and the old servants of the different houses still tell marvellous tales of the luxury and splendor in the time of their ancient lords.

Balls and concerts cost fabulous prices to those who gave them, for they brought thither at any cost the first musicians of the time ; but they often likewise cost considerable to the guests, who often lost at play, in a single night, their whole patrimony ; thus a friend or relative would arrive at a house rich in land and money, and leave it, having lost at the gaming-table, nearly all that he possessed. There, conclude these politicians, are the worms, to use your expression, which eat up the very marrow of their bones. Is it not so ?

And I will answer, with their permission, that :

If this extravagance, this luxury, this exorbitant expenditure, were practised by all the great families of the republic, they might certainly be

productive of great evils ; but the Venetian lords had a more secret and more destructive worm, which deprived them of their vital sap and left them withered and dried up.

Here the politicians resume their task of anatomizing, as it were, the infirmities of this sovereign republic which, in spite of all her misfortunes and all her disorders, internal and external, reigned queen and mistress, above all the kingdoms of the world during her duration, which was equal to that of the Roman empire, lasting four thousand years. They say that the vices of the nobility caused the downfall of the republic ; they give, as an example, the melancholy and habitual profanation of the sanctity of the marriage sacrament, as exemplified in the odious practice of the *cavalieri serventi*, to the great scandal of Christianity ; they go on to speak more at length of the vices that prevailed amongst the lords till they turn to us with an air of decision, saying :

These are positively the only causes which can be assigned for the final ruin of the Venetian republic. When you add to this the enormous debts with which her estates were loaded ; the oppression and injustice practised by the great, who kept armed bands of *bravi* in their palaces to oppress the weak, and the lack of severity towards them on the part of the magistrates ; the revolting injustice practiced in the courts of law to the prejudice of the weak, you have before you what you call the secret worms which preyed upon the Venetian nobility.



And I, in my turn, repeat that these disorders are indeed most deadly and fatal, and may lead to the downfall of the state ; but I maintain that the republic still had in itself sufficient force and sufficient elements of existence that, when Napoleon, the First Consul, openly declared that “ that old carcass had henceforth neither life nor breath,” he was utterly and entirely mistaken. Venice fell suddenly, unconsciously, to the great amazement of the Doge and Senate, to the overwhelming surprise of the nobility, and when the people least expected it, and slept at night peaceful and free, to wake slaves and bondmen, they saw that the glorious banner of St. Mark had disappeared during the night ; that the lions were no longer upon the ducal palace ; that the oriflammes had vanished ; that the Doge had fled ; that the senators were concealed. They beheld with astonishment the tri-colored flag waving in the air and pikes surmounted by the *Bonnet Rouge*. Was this not most marvellous. In less than twenty-four hours, a republic of four thousand years’ duration had died, disappeared from amongst the nations, as a man who dies of asphyxia, in total unconsciousness, and what were the reasons for it all ?



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE ABBE TENTORI AND THE SIOR ZANETTO.\*

ON the 16th of May, 1797, the French entered Venice, sacked the ducal palace, which for so many centuries had been inaccessible even to profane eyes, and which contained the most precious relics, spoils taken from Greece, the Ionian Isles, Negropont, Cyprus, and Candia, while it was adorned with curiosities from Japan, China, Persia, and the Indies, which the republic in its former com-

\*The most celebrated Italian historian of our days complain in one of his letters to us that, as regards the historical romance touching upon the fall of Venice, it is impossible to determine what is history and what is pure fiction. In reply, we would say to him and to every other reader that, with the exception of the two interlocutors, d'Almavilla and Zanetto, all that we introduce is history, drawn from the most authentic documents. Many still living in Venice, or in other cities of her dominion, may remember the persons, the places, and the circumstances to which we refer. The two fictitious characters are merely introduced to give life to the dialogue; the Abbé Tentori is really the historian speaking for himself, desiring to impart to you the information contained in his chronological and reasonable collection of unpublished documents which contain the diplomatic story of the revolution and fall of the Venetian republic. This work has become very rare, as the conquerors of Italy caused all the copies of it which her jealous and vigilant police could discover to be burned. If a certain "Neapolitan exile" had taken care to examine the nature of our works, he would not have written regarding "The Jew of Verona" that the author who knew that he lied was constantly asserting that he told the truth. The author must assert this, that his readers may distinguish what is historical from what is fictitious.

merce had brought thither on those vessels by means of which was carried on its trade with the East, to which the Venetians possessed the golden key, and enriched by the magnificent gifts from the Ottoman Porte, gorgeous presents from the caliphs of Bagdad, Egypt, and Damascus, from the rulers of Barbary and the various principalities of Bulgaria, Servia, and Bosnia ; that ducal palace where for centuries the destinies of Europe hung in the balance ; whence were sent forth wise laws and remarkable statutes ; where the great enterprise of the Crusades was discussed, the fate of the Byzantine Empire and of the Asiatic coasts decided ; whence issued the decisions of alliances which caused the mightiest monarchs of Christendom to tremble ; where war was so often planned, and peace so often restored ; whence set forth those valiant admirals, who guided her glorious fleets to the conquest of so many states, planting the standard of St. Mark on so many Saracen cities, vanquishing so many Turkish vessels, that Italy might be triumphant, nor ever fall beneath the yoke of Mussulman tyranny ; that palace, the repository of the secrets of so many ages, in which was preserved the golden book of the great patrician lines ; the dwelling of so many Doges ; of which the gilded halls rang with the learned discourses of her councillors and her law-givers, her captains and her governors, her admirals and the ambassadors of foreign nations ; where embassies from emperors, kings, and lords of the East and West were received ; where generous and ready hospitality was

given to exiled Popes, ill-treated and oppressed by the iniquity of the great, where hapless princes found an asylum, and glorious emperors were entertained, coming, as they did, like Sheba of old, who marvelled at the magnificence of Solomon, to visit and admire this powerful republic, and the magnificence, order, wisdom, power, dignity, and justice with which she governed the city of the sea and the fortunate people who dwelt in peace and luxury under her sway.

From the galleries of the palace these sovereigns could enjoy the sight of the citizens, with their cheerful demeanor, lively manners, and elegant apparel, and the lake between San Giorgio and the Salute, alive with gondolas and little barks, in gala rig, covered with silk, brocade, and velvet, ornamented with banners, with gilded poop, and prow painted in the most brilliant colors, wreathed with flowers, surmounted by ostrich and heron plumes, with oars painted scarlet except the handles, which were of ebony or ivory. Thus these foreign monarchs, from the balconies of the palace, saw at a glance the wealth, content, and cheerfulness of this fortunate people, who lived thus tranquilly under the mild and gracious government of their fathers.

Now this palace, so marvellously beautiful, containing in itself the glory of so many centuries, on the very day of the French entrance was thrown open and abandoned to the pillage of an infuriated populace, instigated and incited to every species of

violence ; the Golden Book was seized and cast into an immense bonfire, where it was speedily reduced to ashes, and with it all the nobility of the patricians of Venice, which was declared extinguished with the last spark of that book ; then was proclaimed aloud the equality of all classes, orders, and conditions. Then did the maddened crowd rush into the rich and luxurious apartments of the doge and the first magistrates of the republic, where everything was pillaged or destroyed ; gold, silver, and other articles of great value were stolen ; the tapestries of Arras, silken draperies of the most delicate texture from Thibet, China, and Persia, were torn from the wall ; bronzes, carvings, and magnificent furniture mutilated and destroyed ; the bed and window curtains, mirrors, vases, clocks, and candelabras, even the very provisions from the kitchen larder, and wine from the cellars, were carried off.

Among this horde of pillagers came a wise and clear-sighted man, who, seeing the pillage of the ducal palace, brought with him twelve porters, each carrying a large basket with two handles (like those used by bakers), and proceeded to the *Pregadi*, where in were the great archives of the republic. Here he paused, and, glancing around him, saw that he was alone, for in that apartment there were no jewels nor relics to steal, but only old papers. Approaching one of the shelves, he drew thither the documents concerning the latest acts of the Council of the Wise, the records of more than twenty years, from 1780 to 1797, the date of the downfall of the republic



and the French invasion.\* The twelve large baskets were filled with these documents and carried to his house. The man paid and dismissed the porters, who could not understand the strange whim of this eccentric man, who chose to fill his house with all these worthless papers; but the worthy man knew what he was about. He wished to find in this formidable mass of documents the real causes of the downfall of Venice, and, as we shall see by the sequel, he gained his ends in a manner surpassing his highest hopes.†

This wiseacre was the Abbé Tentori, who, after the uproar of the French Revolution, saw, or thought he saw, in the Venetian Republic certain anomalies which he could neither understand nor explain. He turned the matter over and over in his mind, and was constantly hitting upon new explanations of it; but the good abbé, for all his ingenuity, never suspected that it was all the work of a cruel and crafty serpent full of venomous poison, and of which the breath envenomed the wisest resolutions of the doge and Senate, and this was precisely the secret and interior worm which we mentioned in the last chapter as gnawing at the backbone of the republic.

The Abbé Tentori, discussing with other pru-

\*The author saw this year at Venice the original Golden Book preserved in the imperial archives; it is simply the names of the patricians in order of their birth. That burned by the rage of the populace was simply a copy, or official catalogue, like the Cracas of Rome, or the almanacs of the court.

† We heard these particulars from a friend of the Abbé Tentori, who probably had them from his own mouth.

dent and discreet friends the indolence of the Senate in regard to providing proper defence for the republic against the storm that was gathering over her head, as well as over great portion of the countries of Italy, spoke confidentially, and, as it were, under his breath, remembering the old Venetian axiom: "*Della serenissima no se discorra, né in ben né in mal.*"\* Still, he could not entirely restrain his thoughts, and said:

"Is it possible, my friends, that our lords can be so blind that they do not see the absolute necessity of arming both by sea and land, provisioning the fortresses, and preparing by every possible means to remain neutral while commanding respect from all who would attack the safety of the republic? Where are the wisdom, foresight, and prudence of the Counsel of the Wise, the Senate, and the doge? To remain at peace with all, neutral among contending powers, is, with God's help, the right course for us to pursue. But disarmed neutrality! is it not offering a dainty to the ravenous? is it not a courteous invitation for them to take a bite? and bite they will, and swallow at a mouthful. Oh! what incomprehensible blindness and negligence!"

"Ta, ta, ta, hush, Tentori! hush, for the love of Heaven!" said an old gentleman in a periwig who had been a contemporary of the great captain. "You allow yourself not only to be heard speaking

\* "Of his highness, or of the sovereign, converse not, whether for good or evil."

of their Serene Highnesses, but what is much worse, calling them idle and negligent. Come now, their highnesses do not require that I should take up their defence against you, who are a man of sense, and speak only through zeal. Hem! pardon me, my friend; you speak from zeal, eh? that's certain. Still, as an old and faithful servant of the state, I should say, and I may say, that if the most powerful Senate does not take all those precautions of which you speak, with all due respect, of course, it is because, in very truth, since the great peace of 1718, made by the Poloponnesian, Morosini, the state has been so tranquil that, except the little risings in 1763 and 1780, which are almost forgotten, it has been as calm as a lake of milk. Therefore it has not been thought necessary to garrison the mouths of rivers, nor to provision the fortresses of Peschiera, Legnago, Palmanova, Zara, Cattaro, and others, whether inland or maritime. The army is reduced to a little handful of Sclavonians and cannoneers, who smoke their pipes during the winter months and lounge away the summer noons under the shade of the vines and fig-trees, planted among the ramparts, making of them and the courtyard gardens and orchards, so that in the trenches, instead of guns, mortars, and great, ugly cannons, are seen the green leaves, and graceful clusters of the black grape, or the red and fragrant peach. The courtyards are unpaved, the walls falling, the battlements crumbling, and the outer moats sown with corn and oats. And now, my reverend friend,

I ask you, would you have the state ruin herself by the outlay necessary to maintain an armed neutrality? Nonsense! Why the wealth of Crœus would scarcely suffice! Do you think the state sows sequins and that they sprout like pumpkins? So, my dear Tentori, think before you speak; always know the state of things first; always know, and then—”

“And then, and then . . . why do you talk about the treasury, my dear Zanetto? The treasury must be full to overflowing, if we judge by the outlay. After the death of the Doge Paolo Renier, during the eight days that the forty electors were shut up in the palace to elect his Serene Highness Manin, do you know how much was spent? For bread, wine, oil, and vinegar, 29.421 pounds; for fish, 24.410; for meat, fowl, and game, 20 360; for ham and sausages, 3.980; for sweetmeats and wax candles, 47.660; for fine wines, coffee, and sugar, 63.845; for fruit, flowers, and sauces, 6.314; for kitchen utensils, coal, and wood, 31.851; for hired harnesses spoiled, 41.624; for sundries, 108.910; for tooth-picks, .25.”

“Mercy, what mouths! what stomachs! The ducal air must sharpen the appetite.”

“That is not all, dear Zanetto; you may add, What noses! In those eight days were expended for tobacco, 4.931 pounds; for playing-cards, .200; for other parlor games, .606; for night caps, .506; for stockings and nets of black silk to tie up their queues, .64; for snuff-boxes, 3.067; combs *a la royale* for the wig and forelock, 2.150; for

essence of rose, lavender, vanilla, and for rouge, .182."\*

"My dear abbé, you astonish me. If they elected a doge every two months, as at Lucca, we might say good-by to the treasury."

"Besides, you see, Zior Zanetto, that, considering the matter in another way, I suppose the state to have sufficient funds to maintain her armed neutrality, as she has done in the past, for instance, in the troubles of 1735 and 1743, when she thus protected her life and liberty. In the first place, consider, my good Zanetto, that the republic is mistress of a sixth part of this beautiful Italy, and rules over fifteen millions of subjects. In the inland states alone she counts no less than twenty flourishing and thickly-populated cities, with three thousand five hundred communes, rich in fertile lands, producing every species of grain, fruit, and cattle, and surpassing in industry and the arts the finest countries of Southern Italy. All the frontiers of her provinces are provided with royal citadels, fortifications, and guarded by mountains, streams, lakes, and the sea, with strong and well-provisioned fortresses; and although in sixty years of peace some of these forts may have been partly dismantled by time, and here and there sustained some injury, yet, believe me, the state has architects and master masons to restore and rehabilitate them, and put them in condition to sustain long and fiery assaults. As for the army, I am quite of

\* Mutinelli, "Archives of Venice." Year 1789. Chapter: "Expenses incurred after the death of the Doge Paolo Renier."



your opinion that, undoubtedly, with only five thousand foot soldiers scattered through the fortified inland towns, it could not hold ground against the French army if it takes a notion to come and attack it, as it did in Savoy, and threatens to do in Piedmont; but in the Isles, in Dalmatia and Albania, she has garrisons of eighteen thousand men. The number would be small did we not take into account the Slavonian and Albanian artillery and infantry, who are brave, hardy, and energetic men, daring and warlike, inured to war by their constant skirmishing with the Turks. As for Italian troops, Venice could put in arms, whenever she pleases, what are called the *Cerne*, or militia, of the country, composed of the flower of the warlike and vigorous young mountaineers of Carnia and Friuli, than which you never saw finer grenadiers, and the mountaineers of the Alps from the valley of Brenta to the valleys of Brescia and Bergamo, who are a strong, spirited, and valiant-hearted race. Besides these, there are the peasants of Trivigiano, Feltrino, Bellunese, besides those of the Euganean and Veronese hills, of the plains of Polesine, of the Adige, and the fertile towns and villages beyond the Mincio; and will you then tell me, my dear Zanetto, that Venice could not raise an army which would command respect and protect herself against that nest of hornets? I do not speak of the twenty-five *Condottieri d'Arme*, great lords and warriors who, in virtue of the privileges accorded to them by the republic, should have the command of a hundred mounted men armed at their own expense,

and making two thousand five hundred sabres ready to be drawn in her defence whenever she chooses to call on them. She has, besides, fifty vessels in the ports, others in the arsenal ready to be lunched at need. She has sailors at her command, and powder, bullets, ammunition, and all the utensils of war, with which the arsenal is positively overflowing. Since the victory of Ems, all it requires is a new admiralty to rival the Dandolo, Morosini, Barbarigo, Pesaris, and Loredani. Of the treasury of the state I will not speak. The nine millions of ducats that she receives annually, and that in so long a peace could not have been expended, are a rich deposit sufficient for the greater expenses. Then she can increase the taxes; there are wealthy citizens, loyal and deeply attached to their country, who, in such circumstances, would not abandon her.”\*

\* The evidence has clearly shown how flourishing was the condition of the treasury of the republic. Besides, after the French invasion the Venetians maintained for eighteen long months that rapacious army, which, not content with stealing every day from the commissariat the third part of the rations, imposed several millions of taxes, confiscated gold and silver from the churches, sanctuaries, and private citizens, whom they robbed of everything, besides committing enormous robberies, and every species of pillage and rapine, till it was a perfect deluge. Still the treasury of the republic gave large subsidies to the cities devastated by Jacobin cupidity. To Verona, which was reduced to the worst condition, it gave 2,007,026 ducats; to Brescia, 200,010; to Padua, 800,781; to Vicenza, 52,332; to Crema, 21,000; to Feltre, 7,600; to Treviso, Belluno, Pordenone, Ceneda, Cadore, 91,026; to Cividale del Friuli, 4,000; to Oderzo, 5,000; to Asolo, 10,000; to Conegliano, 39,000; to Bassano, 70,976; besides 255,039 for other requirements, all being furnished to supply the wants of the French army. When we add to this the fact that the French, who entered Venice under the mask of friendship, robbed the arsenal of about forty millions' worth, and the port of Corfu of about eight millions, sums which greatly surpassed the

“It is a pity, dear Tentori,” cried the gentleman in the wig—“it is a pity that you were not one of the *Consejio dei Dieci*,\* so much knowledge of politics do you display. But do you imagine that you know more than the most excellent Senate, which has thought proper to maintain an unarmed neutrality? Oh! the wisecracks of the house of Pisani, that of Giustinian, that of Grimani, Erizzo, Dolfin, Mozzenigo, or Morosina, might hide their leads in presence of your superlative statesmanship. To hear you speak of the affairs of state, one might mistake you for the fourth inquisitor with Paolo Bembo, Zaccaria Valaresso, and Camillo Bernardini Gritti, or at least a foreign minister or ambassador, in place of Alvise Quirini, Andrea Fontana, Antonio Cappello, Rocco Sanfermo, Nicolo Venier,† or other astute and sagacious legislators at the courts of Petersburg, Paris, Vienna, London, Madrid, Turin—”

“Enough, Zier Zanetto; you have carried the joke far enough. I like things to the point. Since you name superior men, I can cite many others who

debts of the state; the treasures stolen from individuals, consisting of gold, silver, diamonds, statues, and precious stones; the cruel imposts laid upon the people; the devastation of their villas, gardens, barns, and cellars; the destruction caused by the army in its encampments, or in fields where battles took place, the expense was incalculable. We say all this without falsifying Fabio Mutinelli, who, in his “Historical Memoirs” (which we only saw after these chapters were written), shows how negligent was the Venetian Republic in its last years; but we have shown, in our turn, the power and resources of that republic, if she had taken proper precautions.

\* Council of Ten

† These are the names of the inquisitors and Venetian ambassadors of that day.

cross themselves at the extraordinary proceedings of our excellencies. They declare and maintain that if the republic had acted in the same manner when she was threatened by Germany, France, Naples, Castile, Bohemia, and Hungary, she would long since have been swallowed up in the vortex, even before all Europe united against her in the League of Cambray. And after that famous sledge-hammer, which dealt her, as it were, a blow upon the head, she had still sufficient brains to steer her way and maintain her neutrality, striking terror (because she was armed) into all the Italian princes. And in the wars between Russia and Turkey, and the dissensions between the house of Austria and the Bourbons, she maintained her dignity in such fashion that the ambassadors of these powerful kingdoms came fawning upon her to induce her to remain neutral, or to incline in favor of either court, because aided by her it would feel itself invincible. Well, let us see what her present line of conduct will bring forth to protect us against these Jacobin hordes."

"Let us hope she will bring forth something similar to that which the mighty head of Jupiter brought forth—Minerva, fully armed and equipped."

"I see in Venice certain vipers which must have been brought forth by the revolution, and God grant that the neutrality of their Serene Highnesses may not bring forth basilisks and serpents. I tell you that these Jacobins are birds of ill-omen. They go about freely among the people and throw money to right and left. All the artis's are em-

ployed ; they take portraits of the lords of the Council, and more especially of our noble ladies. These portraits are paid for most liberally, and are sent out of Venice under the seal of the Signor de Jacobi, agent of the French Republic, or Signor Lallement, minister plenipotentiary of the same. Where do these things go ? To France, of course. What is done with them there these devils of Jacobins alone know. Perhaps they make love to them."

"How do you know all this ?"

"Because the artists have told me, and further added that they have given sittings to these lords and ladies during the night. I know that this is done by stealth ; and, in order that their families may know nothing of it, they go to the artist's house. I know that they meet at night in certain solitary places in the vicinity of San Simeone Grande, where Argus himself could not see them ; and Goldone, who knows all about these things, describes, in his comedy of the "Donne Curiose" ("Curious Women"), certain symbols of the Freemasons. But——"

"My dear Tentori, I see you are a familiar of the inquisitors."

"And perhaps I see even more than they do. I would not dare to open my mouth on this subject did I not know my audience. But you are discreet, and know that I only speak for the best. I may therefore add that French engineers have taken the plan of the arsenal, with all the passages leading thereto, the Castle of San Pietro, and the



fortifications of Malamocca, and of the whole ducal palace, from the Pozzi to the Piombi ; of the Bridge of Sighs ; all the dungeons of Bertolda, Liona, Forte, and Langariola.\* They have also produced a list of the prisoners, and are acquainted with all the secret stairs, the covered passages, and the snares or traps. In fact, I tell you, they know everything."

"And why is this ?

"And why is this ? oh ! do you not see the underhand game they are playing ? I see it all very well, and have long seen it. These strangers take note of how many gondoliers on the canal ; of the passages of Leon Bianco, Lizzafusina, and those along the Venetian coast ; of the barques of Fusina, Mestre, Chioggia, and Murano ; of the richest convents, of the wealthiest houses, of the most important banks, of the merchants of highest standing. Now, what do these things indicate ? And their excellencies, meanwhile, rest complacently in their unarmed neutrality. Do you know how many Jacobins pass by the Piazza di San Marco, the Quay degli Schiavoni, and the Rialto, to the Merceria ?"

"Oh ! but the three inquisitors keep their eyes open. They insist upon a passport, a ticket of residence in the metropolis ; and inn-keepers, landlords, and proprietors of hotels are obliged, under heavy penalties, to notify them of all who put up at their hotels.

"Very good, my dear Zanetto, but oh ! you are

\* Prisons of the palace. We were told at Venice that some of them had lost their names, but we found them all called as above.

simple on certain points. These men enter Venice under the garb of gondoliers, craftsmen, and mariners, under the *felze* (a felt covering for the cabin of the gondola), pulling an oar, and under the livery of certain lords even among the Council of the Wise ; and most of them do not put up at inn or hostelry, but live concealed in the palaces of the Frari, San Polo, Rialto, Sant' Isaia, and Canal Regio, and even in certain monasteries in the shadow of the cloister. Not, indeed, through the fault of the monks, but of his Excellency A or his Excellency B, who recommends them as worthy guests. Meanwhile, these individuals sow broadcast the most pernicious doctrines. I will not speak of the republican emblems imprinted on buttons, pipes, saucers, coffee-cups, and fans, all of which they introduce by stealth, in order to corrupt Venice. And as for books and colored prints, a perfect avalanche of them is brought in, in vessels laden with fruit, barrels of sweet-water, gondolas full of nice ladies with very high coiffures, and God alone knows the effect they have upon Venice." \*

"Nonsense ! In barrels of water ! with loads of fruit ! But in a word, what do the French people want of the Venetians ? "

"The moon shines bright, the night is fair ;  
Let us go upon the lake to breathe the cool, fresh air. †

\* These details are given in various books published in 1800 (when the frauds perpetrated by Masonry were fresh in every mind), and were in every hand. We Venetians have heard these things told time after time by our fathers round the fireside.

† "La notte le bella,  
Risplende la luna ;  
Ondeno in laguna  
I freschi a ciapar."

So sing our gondoliers," said the abbé; "but observe that the French also come to take the fresh air at Venice, and all men gaze at her through lorgnettes, admire her beauty, sigh for so gracious a lady and—

" 'By the fire of their beams  
She is consumed, and delivered to death.' \*

"Do you know, my dear abbé, that those verses of Filicaia sound well?"

"And will sound better," said the Abbé Tentori, "when the French come down from the Alps to make Venice a lover's visit. Meanwhile, they keep her in dressing-gown and in morning toilet, and if she makes a movement towards arming herself, as in 'Bradamante and Erminia,' her periwigged councillors whisper in her ear:

" 'Do not, fair lady. If thou armst thyself, thou wilt be taken for an enemy, whereas now thou art at peace with all. Thy beauty, thy dignity, the majesty of thy mien, the love-light in thine eyes, the jewels on thy breast, the royal gem which sparkles on thy brow, will charm away even the deadliest enemy, and leave thee, amid the battles which deluge all Europe with blood, Venice the beautiful, gay, rich, joyous, happy, amid music, and mirth, and the dance. Happy art thou; for who equals thee in wisdom, O most serene! Who like thee has naught to fear from the changing sky or the stormy deep? but in a pure and tran-

\* "Del suo bello ai rai  
Par che si strugga e pur la spada a morte."

quill atmosphere dwellest, fortunate among the most fortunate kingdoms of the world.'”

“ You, my dear abbé,” said Zanetto, “ are always ready with a sarcasm. Her councillors, indeed ! But are you sure enough of these matters to indulge in such jokes. You would have it that the Venetian lords, those wise and learned gentlemen, give such absurd counsel as this to the Senate. They have their own interests to guard. And after all, they are the administrators of the republic ; the doges spring from their midst, the senators, ambassadors, captains, and admirals. Who govern us ? They ! Who rule ? Still they ! The inland cities are governed by patricians ; the Isles, Dalmatia, and Albania by patricians. Among them they have the dignity of the court, of the great offices, the councils, and the most honored positions, and wealth of every sort. Of what are you dreaming, then ? Do you think they would lose everything at a stroke ? Would any one of the great houses wish to fall from the position of sovereign to that of a servant ? and a servant to whom ? To the Jacobins ! My dear Tentori, have some common sense ; you make a mountain out of a mole-hill.”

“ Certainly the nobles are not so foolish as to wish to fall off the thrones, whereon they sit, head foremost into plebeian mire. That is true ; such a thing would be absurd ; but all these germenized gentlemen, who have little enough brains beyond the canals, still less beyond the Alps, do not see as far as that ; and meanwhile a number of dissipated, profligate, impoverished gentlemen, in debt up to

their ears, and without religion of any sort, wish for a change of things, hoping to be the sole gainers thereby."

"Calumnies, dear abbé; calumnies. I pray you speak more respectfully of our excellencies."

"Oh! I do not know, eh? Did I not see them? did I not watch them purposely when they went to meet Micheroux, Henin, Jacobi, or Lallement, the agents of French Jacobinism, and to negotiate with them in secret? With my own eyes I have seen there the Chevalier Girolamo Zulian and many other noblemen, who afterwards came before the Council, and spoke very loudly in favor of unarmed neutrality, and recommended that the flag of the French Republic be permitted to float from the palace. To obtain this triumph, the Jacobins spent eighty French livres, and the orator who obtained the triumph was Zulian; and this he did in defiance of the people, who would have trampled the abhorred ensign in the dust had not sentinels been placed there to guard it. Do not make me speak too much, mark you, for I can tell some fine tales. And did not the French ex-ministers, Flotte and Chauvelin, who were driven from Florence, come secretly into Venice, carrying fire and flame with them, in spite of the precautions of the three inquisitors? I know that Flotte was concealed at Rovigo, welcomed to the Manfredine palace, and thence made his way into Venice; and the inquisitors were apprised of this by the Chevalier Antonio Cappello, ambassador to his Holiness Pius VI. And were there not *Masonic lodges* established



in Venice, under the very eyes of the inquisitors, who looked for them in front of the door when they were behind it? These Masons are crafty, and act like children at a game of hide and seek—while their companions are seeking them in garret and cellar they are hidden behind the first door.”\*

“What you say is impossible, my friend; for do you not see that every one approves of the reception at Verona of the Count de Provence under the name of the Count de Lille? The Senate received him with the greatest cordiality, and the doge was perfectly delighted; and the whole council applauded the magnanimous resolution of the doge and Senate, who thus braved the anger of the French Republic. I tell you our patricians are of one mind and one heart, and Masonry will never get a hold upon them.”

“On the part of the Senate, this reception was sincere; but . . . shall I say it? I dare say you will call me malicious; if so, so much the worse. I will nevertheless speak frankly. I am convinced that more than one member of the Council negotiated this reception of the Count de Lille, being all the time in communication with the French Jacobins, in order to have, if occasion demanded, a pretext of complaint against the Senate.”

“God avert your prognostics, Tentori; but I call that carrying suspicion beyond all reasonable

\* The existence of a Masonic lodge in Venice was accidentally discovered. The Chevalier Girolamo Zulian forgot a roll of Masonic papers in a gondola. These documents fell into the hands of the State Inquisitor, Girolamo Diedo. The lodge was closed, the Masonic emblems burned, the names of the Masons taken; and yet . . .

limits. In your place, I would scruple having such suspicions, and would drive such evil thoughts from my mind."

"Oh! my conscience is of different metal, and my thoughts respond to the note it strikes there-upon as notes on a musical instrument respond to the diapason. I went to Verona on a mission for the Giuliari family, and visited his highness at the villa of the Counts Gazzola; there I met the Count d'Entragues, the Duke della Vaugujon, and the Baron de Flanchelanden. There I learned many things from the Prince of Nassau, the Duke de Guise, the Bishop of Arras, Marshal de Castries, and other noble French exiles, all of which went to show the evil designs of the Jacobins against the king."

"Has the Count de Lille a large palace at Verona?"

"The palace is not large, but it is delightful. It is in a retired spot, down among the plains of San Domenico and La Trinitá, and is on the shore, just at the great bend of the Adige as it proceeds, broad and majestic, from Verona, flowing far to the south. It is a square edifice, surrounded by walls like an ancient castle; it has large and beautiful halls, cheerful, airy, and well-lighted apartments; on one side it opens upon a spacious courtyard, on the other upon a charming and pleasantly-shaded garden. It commands a view of the delightful scenes beyond the Adige, with their smiling fields and pretty villas, till the eye reaches to the ridge of northern hills, which gradually in-

crease in height till they form one of the loftiest Alpine ranges. The garden consists of a terrace, flower-garden, and park. The park is wooded, full of ancient trees, of which the interlacing branches form a pleasant twilight during the glare of noon. It is truly a restful and refreshing spot for the soul worn by the bustle of cities, where the Counts Gazzola were wont to pass the month of May, and sometimes even the warm summer months. In this little palace the Count de Lille has taken up his abode; there he lives tranquil, sequestered from all intercourse with cities. He has a modest retinue; he goes out rarely, and usually on horseback, with two mounted gentlemen at his side and a few grooms following, and occasionally in a carriage, with no retinue and without pomp."

"How he can receive visits from so many noble strangers is what I cannot understand; for I remember having seen that palace some years ago. If he were residing at one of the great lodges of the Counts Emilii, Giusti dal Giardino e Colomba, the Counts Allegri or Pompei, the Marquises Muselli, Carlotto, Sagramoso, Saibante, or Canossa, then I could understand it."

"Do not trouble yourself about that. The Count de Lille is almost alone in the house, having only a few gentlemen with him; but the Veronese nobility are so generous, munificent, and noble-hearted that, with few exceptions, they take pleasure in welcoming to their midst and doing honor to these victims of Jacobin ferocity; hence they take pains to let them want for nothing suitable to their

rank. Their liberality is truly worthy of noble Christian souls, and has held Verona up to the admiration of all the greatest nations of Europe."

"Therefore I was right," said Zanet o, "when I declared that you see the dark side of everything. What more than the fair and delightful city of Verona could be offered as an asylum to that good but hapless prince, who, escaping in 1791, secretly fled from France, and made every possible effort to save his good brother, Louis XVI., from the dragon's claws; and when all had failed he was received by the most benign lords of Venice and cordially welcomed by our worthy Mocenigo, Mayor of Verona."

"Before you say that I see the dark side of everything, wait till you hear the end. No sooner had the Count de Lille set foot in Verona than the minister of the French Republic at Venice started up like a viper, and called the lords to account for having welcomed that dangerous man, notwithstanding that he was the enemy of the French Republic, their faithful ally."

"What, what! the Jacobin Republic, stained with the blood of so many innocent men; that beheaded its king, and worked out in a hundred ways the destruction of the French kingdom; that murdered so many priests, burned so many churches, threw down so many altars—that republic dares to call itself an ally of ours, which is so Christian, so gentle, so benevolent, the most pacific state in the world! Oh! what falsehood, what presumption, what effrontery. Allies of Venice! Say, rather, allies of Satan."

“Peace, peace, good Zauetto! Did I not tell you the Senate with its *unarmed neutrality* would bring forth something? and it has; its fair and beautiful product is the *alliance*. Observe that the Council of the Wise promoted it, and now boast of it, glory in it, and expect thanks, praise, and applause for having thus saved the republic. They say that it was the happiest of all thoughts; for, while all the world is in agitation, the fortunate States of Venice alone swim in honey.”

“What do you say? I hide my face and dare no longer hold up my head. We the allies of the Jacobins! Oh! shame.”

“Uncover your face, raise your head, compose yourself, for our Council of the Wise cannot err. Some idiots call them traitors, but scarcely is the word out of their mouths than they are taken with a cough, and it is as though they had not spoken. The fact is that Monsieur de Lallement plainly shows his displeasure at our having received the Count de Lille.”

“And what does the Senate say? Does it countenance such audacity?”

“The Senate has a great heart, and the Council of the Wise, who urged it to retain unarmed neutrality, dared not raise its head and respond to such insolence with the authority of those who have reason and force on their side; for one without the other is like a man who limps with one foot, and consequently falls at the first stumbling-block. The Senate, therefore, replied to Lallement’s impertinence with the utmost courtesy:



“That the republic, to maintain neutrality, must be partial to no one; that whoever requires its protection may call upon it, and will always receive a helping hand.”

“Here Lallement compressed his lips and ground his teeth in a manner worthy a philippic of Demosthenes; but their highnesses retained their serenity, and began to mutter between their teeth something or other about the canons of St. John of Lateran.”

“What have the canons to do with this affair?”

“They have a good deal to do with it; you must know that the great Henry IV. of France, wishing to make himself as Italian as possible, asked the Lateran Chapter to have his name enrolled as a canon. His desire was of course gratified; he was elected unanimously. The act was made out before a notary, and first among his titles Henry IV. ever after bore that of Canon of Lateran. Then, my good Zanetto, the great Henry, to confirm and further demonstrate his Italianism, asked of their most serene highnesses the favor of being enrolled in the Golden Book of the Venetian nobility. The republic considered the request an honor, and willingly granted it, glorying in the fact that the Kings of France were henceforth among her citizens.”

“Ah! I understand; the Senate consequently said to Lallement that the Count de Lille was a citizen of Venice.”

“Exactly; and it might have added its noblest citizen; but it would not mention nobility before a

Jacobin Republican, who had dragged nobles in the mire and exalted plebeians—inn-keepers, butchers, and the vilest of the rabble—to the very clouds.”

The clock of St. Mark struck noon, and the friends bade each other good-day; but, pressing Zanetto's hand at parting, Tentori said:

“My friend, every stream has its ebb and flow; I believe that the cause is lost. The secret societies work with all their might, and put swords in the hands of those who will deal the death-blow to the Republic of Venice.”

“God forbid, my dear abbé!”

“Yes, God and the saints preserve us from it! We shall meet soon, Zior Zanetto, not, I trust, to dry each other's tears; however, I will do all in my power to unloose the knotty threads of this tangled skein.”





## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE COUNT D'ALMAVILLA AND THE ABBE TENTORI.

It often happened that the Count d'Almavilla and the Abbé Tentori met in the *salon* of the Pesaro family, and as the latter was a man of much learning, and one whose conversation was flavored with a good spice of Attic sa't, d'Almavilla enjoyed a chat with him. We have already said that the count had received from the king the secret mission of gaining information as to the intentions of the Austrian court and the Venetian Republic, in case the fears of many far-seeing men should be realized and the French attempt the invasion of Italy. It was part of his mission also to urge the emperor to join the League, and to send aid to Piedmont in case of need. He was also to ask a loan from the Venetians; but, above all, to penetrate, if possible, the dark mystery which surrounded the inscrutable policy of the Venetian Senate, wrapped up in its unarmed neutrality. The Sardinian court could not understand how it was that this wise republic, hitherto so prudent and far-sighted in providing for future contingen-

cies, should now remain with folded hands, indolent and indifferent.

D'Almavilla, who had no faith whatever in the frivolous reasons assigned by the Senate, sought everywhere and by every possible means to get hold of some clue which might set him upon the right track, and enable him to fulfil his mission with credit to himself. Whenever he chanced to meet the Abbé Tentori in the drawing-room of Francesco Pesaro, Procura'or of St. Mark, he tried him in every possible way, tormenting him with Voltairean smiles, joking him on his tonsure, on the azure collar worn by Italian priests, or on his powdered ringlets, and the abbé's witty replies were a treat to hear, especially when the Piedmontese diplomat touched upon the supremacy of the people, their rights of equality, the hapless fate of the plebeians, and the pride and arrogance of the nobility.

Tentori praised the count's liberality and benevolence, saying :

“ Very good ! King Victor Amadeus has a noble courtier in one who honors so highly the majesty of kings that, not finding the splendor of the throne sufficiently noble or sublime, he seeks in every nook and corner with his little Voltairean lantern for a sovereignty among the rags and poverty of the populace ! Bravo, Signor Count ! God bless you for your equality ! but 'ell me, if all men are equal, certainly kings must be at least the equals of their subjects ; and yet I think poor Louis XVI. would gladly have enjoyed equal rights with the least of his subjects in the matter of being

allowed to keep his head on his shoulders. All the French, I believe, were declared equal and free except Capet. Why was that ?”

“Because Capet would only have recognized liberty and equality when he was forced to do so,” answered d’Almavilla.

“Good !” cried Tentori. “Then, dear count, take a fool’s advice ; fulfil the desire of the sovereign people and act on the impulse of a generous heart. When you return to Turin go directly to the Piazza di Legna, where under an elm-tree the old barber shaves the peasants and carters, tying a soiled towel round their necks, and putting an ivory ball in their mouths to stretch their cheeks. Call the filthiest-looking porter that chances to be there, salute him respectfully, and, offering him your arm, lead him into your palace, and say to your retinue : ‘ Ho ! there, honor your master and lord, whom I have brought thither.’ Then lead him to the drawing-room, after having presented him to the servants, and introduce him to the countess, saying to her : ‘ Let us go and look for work on the Piazza di Legna, for this is the born master of all that I possess.’”

“ Ah ! you are jesting, my satirical friend,” said the count. “ But where would be the equality ? the porter would become count, and the count porter. That is not logical ; equality for all.”

“ Then in what way, all counts or all porters ?”

“ Neither, but a happy medium.”

“ Why, you are jesting in your turn, dear count. Mine is the logic of the philosophic rabble, who



had not a spot on earth to call their own. The porter a count, you a porter; kings to the guillotine, and they to the throne; the rich begging, they laden down with wealth; sovereigns become subjects, and they become tyrants, who must be obeyed implicitly or—”

“Stop, my dear abbé; you are taking the wrong road ”

“Yet it is the same one taken in France, taken by all the demagogues who cry out liberty and equality, and that which will be taken in Italy if they get their claws upon us.”\*

Thus did these two men of widely different character argue whenever they chanced to meet; but d'Almavilla nevertheless felt a singular regard for the Abbé Tentori, and always did his best to draw him out. One day—it was in the year 1795—as the count was passing along by the Canal di Castello, he chanced to meet the Abbé Tentori coming out of the ancient Cathedral of San Piero. The place being lonely, the count invited him to take a seat in his gondola, and go with him as far as Murano, to look at some magnificent mirrors for the Marquis Lascaris di Ventimiglia.

“Count,” said the abbé, “do you think I have the sort of a face worth looking at in a mirror? My mother always said I was hideous; we will see if the Murano mirrors will add anything to my beauty.”

\* The events of 1848-9 in Rome, in Tuscany, and in Lombardy clearly demonstrate this truth. Take, for instance, Louis Phillippe, who, when he read in the *Chenu* that he had been defeated and dethroned by a handful of ruffians, died of a broken heart.

So saying, he followed the count into the gondola, and they stretched themselves on the damask cushions under the tent. They were alone. Two gondoliers were without at the oars, crying out at every turn, "*Stali, premi!*" to warn the other gondoliers, lest there might be a collision. The count opened the conversation :

"Well, my dear Tentori, what are we to think of the stupidity of the Lion of St. Mark? By my faith, he sleeps soundly. But where, in heaven's name, are those lynx-eyes which used to glitter in his head, and that roar which used to make itself heard over oceans and continents? where are his terrible claws, which made friends and foes alike tremble? where was that mane, which when shaken alarmed the world? The lion sleeps, has become a dotard, toothless, bereft of his claws, his mane worm-eaten. Give him a breath of English salt, and perchance he will awake."

"I would give the sleeper sulphur and brimstone, or, still better, gunpowder. I would kindle such a fire beneath him that the sparks from it would flash from his eyes and nostrils, claws and mane. Alas! it is not a sleep; it is a lethargy, a charm, a malignant spell. Circling around him I behold certain enchanters, certain old foxes who prowl about by night to rob hen-roosts."

"What nonsense are you talking? In my opinion the spell is simply her unarmed neutrality, which will cause the irreparable ruin of the republic. Her fall will cause other falls. I cannot understand why your statesmen do not perceive all this."

“I will tell you. Many of the men who govern the state look at things through your spectacles, and perceive only two words—liberty, equality. Ins'tead of pointing to the Polar Star, their compass points to Berenice's Hair. Loud cry the watchful mariners: ‘You are taking a crooked course! Beware of hidden shoals, beware of rocks; turn your sails or your course will be lost!’ ‘Non-sense!’ cry the others, ‘we sail with the wind over tranquil seas; the breeze is fair, our bark is strong, the shoals are distant, the waters deep.’”

“I think, my dear Tentoni,” said the count, “that Cancer, the Crab, is their Polar Star, and not Berenice's Hair.”

“Ha, ha! count; you understand me very well, but you affect to misunderstand, because you have been caught by one of the ringlets of that same hair. Your logic plainly declares it, that is if you are in earnest when you talk as you do. Literally speaking, the false doctrines of fair, golden-haired France have, I am more than certain, led astray so many members of the Council of the Wise, who play upon the good faith of the Senate and the doge; and we cry out till we are breathless, ‘Where is the ancient wisdom? where is the policy, the sagacity, and the foresight?’”

“I firmly believe,” said d'Almavilla, “that the republic has few or no men of sense, or, if they have sense, they have no heart, and of what avail is it if the mind be great and the soul has not strength to follow its wise counsels? I often endeavor to urge upon the Chevalier Francesco Pe-

saro that he should use his influence to induce the Venetian nobility to enter into the Italian League. I told him that the emperor is also of my opinion ; that he will send a strong body of men to Piedmont, and Piedmont is, as you know, the key of Italy ; and that another strong garrison will defend the Milanese frontiers. Naples will promptly fly to arms ; Rome may hesitate, but, seeing the disorders of France, will supply men and money to the League ; Tuscany feared at first for the commerce of Leghorn, but, urged on by Lord Hervey, I trust will soon be ours. Parma, but for Dutillet, would not have hesitated so long ; but she has decided at length, and your republic alone has hitherto refused to espouse this worthy cause."

"What did Pesaro answer, he who is so ardent a patriot, and a man of such judgment and energy ?"

"No sooner do I touch that sensitive cord than Pesaro reddens ; he clenches his fist, he draws himself up, he raises his right arm. One would suppose he was about to make an eloquent address ; but no ; he mutters between his teeth some miserable, pitiful reasons. A few days ago I took my man unawares, and told him plainly that I knew just as well as he did, and better, too, that their serene highnesses had a secret understanding with their ambassadors at the various European courts ; and that if the republic knows, through the state inquisitors, all that passes in the privacy of foreign cabinets, foreign ambassadors also have their little angel or familiar spirit to teach them Venetian mysteries. I begged him to tell me frankly how it

was that, as long ago as the 14th of August, 1788, Antonio Cappello, Venetian ambassador to Paris, warned the republics of events soon to transpire in France, all of which had been planned and instigated in the Masonic lodges ; that on the 20th of December of the same year Count Rocco San Fermo, minister to our court of Turin, predicted the misfortunes which he foresaw for Italy through her Freemasons, who were connected with those of France. I also added that, by another despatch of the 20th June, 1790, the same minister announced the establishment at Paris of a Propaganda against the Italian States, adding that Duport had made out a plan of the infernal means to be employed in order to attain this end. From Paris Cappello confirmed the accounts of San Fermo by his despatch of the 7th September, and urged the republic to open her eyes and arm herself. In another despatch of the 2d December he drew a graphic picture of the Revolution, and with a master-hand portrayed its fire and flame. He concluded by saying that the republic might indeed maintain its neutrality if she thought proper, but that this neutrality must be strong, courageous, and well supported by arms."

"And what did Pesaro answer then ? You diplomats spread your nets warily ; the lords believe that their secrets are impenetrable, and you read all their despatches. I believe that if Beelzebub sent his letters by post you would find means to read them. The only despatches which you cannot and will not read are those of God."



“As for those of your serene highnesses, we read them before they reach Venice. I have seen several from your ambassadors at London, Vienna, St. Petersburg, Madrid, and Naples.”

“Very well; but, once more, what did the procurator of St. Mark answer?”

“He looked at me in amazement. I continued: ‘Your excellency, when the king, my master, heard the first mutterings of thunder he gave orders to the Count d’Hauteville, his first minister, to have an understanding with your clear-sighted ambassador, San Fermo, and propose the Italian League to him. Your ambassador, by his despatch of the 5th November, 1791, wrote seriously of the matter to the Senate. What was the result? A complete failure, after the high-sounding, ‘We, Lodovico Manin, by the grace of God Duke of Venice, etc., our wise and circumspect servant Rocco San Fermo, our resident, etc.’\* Then came a long and absurd tirade, written at ‘Our ducal palace, the 19th day of November, VIIIth Decree, 1791, signed Gio. Franc. Buscenello Sec.,’ and expressed, with a great deal of circumlocution, but translated into current coin, it is simply the song of Chichibio, the cook in Boccaccio:

“‘Thou shalt not have it, dark lady—  
It thou shalt not have.’” †

“What did Pesaro say to that couplet?”

\* “Nos Ludovicus Manim, Dei Gratia Dux Venetiarum, etc. Circumspecto et Sapienti Viro Rocho San Fermo, Resident nostro, etc.

† “Non l’avari da mi, donna brunetta—  
Non l’avari da mi.”

“He answered that the Council of Ten, for grave reasons, did not approve of that course of action.”

“Ah! really; well, if our misfortunes were caused by fools, we might say, *Patience!* they are fools, they think and act like fools. But our Senate is condemned to perish by the grave reasons of the Wise; she will perish then by excess of wisdom. Do you know, dear count, I am going to sing you something in good Piedmontese, as you have sung me something in good Venetian: ‘*Nadroleria com costa am smia c’as treuva granca tra i foi.*’”\*

“Bravo! abbé. You might be made master of languages at Montcalieri.”

“I am, however, jesting, and jesting because I dare not trust myself to speak seriously of the matter; but though our blood boils, we must swallow the pill, unless we wish the Council of the Wise to send us to cool ourselves in the Pozzi, like melons put on ice, or to roast ourselves under the Piombi till we are baked as hard as sea-biscuit. Well, how did your conversation with Pesaro end?”

“I continued speaking very frankly of the proposal of the King of Naples, who invited the republic to a league as the only means of safety for Italy. I recited to him from memory the despatches of Andrea Fontana, minister at the court of Ferdinand, dated September 4, 1792, but which resulted in nothing, like those of San Fermo, though

\* “Such jesting to me would seem  
Not even to find place with fools.”

our Count d'Hauteville signified to the Senate 'that a time might come when the stream would increase to such an extent that it would sweep away all the dikes and dams created to oppose its devastating course.' I showed him that I was well informed concerning the action of the Emperor Leopold, and the answer of the lords, who harped on one string—their neutrality; they, however, declared they would not oppose the passage of the army, nor prevent individuals from furnishing them with provisions, selling them arms, powder, horses, or implements of war, for that the republic allowed her citizens full liberty to traffic in her States. When Pesaro began to speak of the grave reasons of the Wise, and to call their course of action towards Piedmont and the other Italian States a wise and patriotic proceeding, I could not help stopping him in his fine reasoning to tell him :

“ ‘Fine and straightforward patriotism that of disoblighing her friends and neighbors, and plotting and counterplotting with that ignoble and disgusting Jacobin republic till they ended by forming an alliance with it.’ ”

“ That is what I call a home-thrust, and I can well believe the poor man felt it. When Pesaro read the honeyed protestations of Jacobi, the French agent, written on the 7th June, 1793, in which he declared that ‘the French Republic respects the supremacy and the rights of all nations and all governments,’ he roared like a wounded lion, saying: ‘No, most prudent lords, do not believe it! Tho e who were cowardly and base enough to kill

their king cannot keep faith with strangers. That republic is a famished wolf who covets our riches, envies our peace, detests our power. She is the deadly enemy of our aristocratic government. She caresses us now as the hyena smiles upon his victim before tearing him to pieces, before devouring him, grinding his bones to extract thence the marrow."

"That was frank, sincere, wise, and courageous language," cried d'Almavilla.

"Yes, count, but many of the other members put their wisdom in pledge at the Ghetto for a few farthings."

"No, my dear Tentori, your Council of the Wise do not give their wisdom so cheap; they pledged it *tanti plurimi* at the National Assembly, at the Constitutional, at the Legislature, and I believe that if they were offered a few thousand French livres they would pledge it to Satan."

"It is certain that, in spite of the cries of the Procurator Pesaro, a number of the Wise advised the Senate to form an alliance with the French Republic. The Senate, abused and deceived by its Judases—pardon my heat, dear count—fell into the snare and signed the abominable treaty. Pesaro must have suffered as some one with an open wound, which becomes more and more painful every day."

"There are, nevertheless, many of the Council who are really endowed with great and undeniable wisdom, who are full of soul, whose intentions are upright, and who love their country. How,

then, does it happen that they are led astray by fools?"

"Say, rather, by rogues, knaves, cheats, and traitors, impudent deceivers full of evil designs. The good follow the right road, and there is but one; the wicked go from right to left, and, if they gain their end, think all roads good, even if they lead them over the body of their fathers or mothers, or make them wade knee-deep in fraternal blood. The state inquisitors make me laugh with scorn, or tremble with rage, when I see them floundering around in all directions to discover the emissaries of Freemasonry, whose mission is to cast the brand of discord and rebellion, and the poison of license and unbelief into the Venetian cities. The inquisitors do not perceive that the citizens, counsellors, magistrates, and lords are furious Freemasons, who are continually amongst them, at their tables, at their banquets, even in the very stalls of the Supreme Council."

"Then you believe that there are Freemasons amongst the Council of the Wise? You do them great injustice, as also the Senate which tolerates them, and the country which confides to them the government of the republic."

"It is they who wrong their country; and the wrong is the greater that they cover themselves with the mantle of hypocrisy in their high station, and therefore screen themselves from the observation of the Senators and the doges. Do not doubt for an instant that they are concerned in the secret conspiracies of the Masons. There now exists in



Venice a bookstore which, since 1785, has been the Great Orient of the sect founded by Cagliostro. There are many of their excellencies who had themselves inscribed, even at Paris, in the most famous lodges, and also at London, in Germany, or at Roveredo. When Cagliostro came thither and palmed himself off as a physician, and they as people with some trouble of the spine or stomach, while in reality their malady was only of the head or heart, poisoned by the pernicious books of the French philosophers."

"It is not a mere doubt, nor idle suspicion of a poor witless brain, to believe that many of these worthies are found among the Council of the Wise. I am not the only one who firmly believes that they are the cause of all the evils which threaten the fortunes of the republic, and, if God does not protect it, its very life. We know all those who meet by night in a lodge at Rio Marin, which was let by the procurator of St. Mark, Marco Contarini, to a man named Colombo. If you care to know the names, I will whisper them to you."

"Well, but after all, my dear abbé, suppose that there are Masons among the Wise, I do not understand how a few of them could lead astray a Senate so wise and composed of so many members, and make it commit such terrible absurdities—as, for instance, that of not entering the Italian League, and of persisting in her unarmed neutrality—things which seem to me as simple as the day; for if neutrality is armed, the whole world bows before it; if it is unarmed, the first rascal

can put her in his pocket. Did you ever chance to see a cat watching a battle among dogs? She is neutral, and, while her adversaries bark, bite, and tear each other to pieces, she stays in the corner, pricks up her whiskers, raises her back, every hair stands on end; she spits and shows her claws, but yet takes no part in the affray. If it happens, however, that the dogs, having settled their differences amongst themselves, take a notion to attack the cat, they no sooner perceive her angry back and outstretched claws than the champions, putting their tails between their legs, slink away without ever looking behind them. How is it, then, that the doge and the Senate can allow themselves to be persuaded, by the folly or perfidy of the Council, to remain alone and unarmed? Explain me that, if you can."

"It is the easiest thing in the world; easier than you think, if you only reflect on two things in regard to the Wise. It is useful to know that at Venice the most important affairs were submitted to the mature examination of the College Extraordinary of the Wise, formed of the Consiglio Maggiore, in greater or less numbers, according to the importance of the case. But in 1420 it was proposed to form, for the examination of important questions, an ordinary and permanent College of the Wise, called the Council of the Wise of the Pregadi. To it was proposed the decision of affairs afterwards to be submitted to the supreme deliberation of the Senate, and to it was accorded the privilege of convoking it or not at pleasure.

At that time there were none admitted to this venerable congress but men of the highest intelligence, experienced diplomatists, well posted on affairs of state and the usages of all European courts; in a word, eminent and superior men who had at heart solely the glory and prosperity of their country. The inquisitors of state referred to the College of the Wise, through the medium of the *Comunicate*, all affairs proposed to the Senate; the despatches of the ambassadors, upon which they sought light and advice; so that the final decision of affairs fell into the hands of the Wise. As time went on, however, fewer precautions were taken as to the choice of persons composing this college, so it came about that the burden of affairs fell upon the Council of the Wise, and hence, if they are not loyal, they can deceive the Senate, either by concealing matters from them or arranging them according to their own views."

"Such is the imperfection of human judgment! The measures which seemed, and which assuredly were most wise, have turned to the detriment of the republic, since, substantially, the Wise are the golden key which unlocks the door of deliberations of the Senate. If the ward of the key becomes deranged, the door cannot be opened."

"You understand me, I see. Give me councillors who are fools, they will be the cause of follies; give me bad councillors, they will be the cause of misfortunes. But the worst of all is that the Senate and the doge, because of the ancient esteem in which the wisdom and loyalty of the Wise were

held, entertain no doubt of the integrity and infallibility of their decisions. In the present instance the Wise have judged that the republic should not enter the League because it is sufficient for itself; the state, therefore, remains *alone*. The Wise have decided that the lords should maintain unarmed neutrality, and the republic remains unarmed."

"But what reasons do they give?"

"They advance arguments which are true in fact, but false in their application. They declare that the fortunate states of the glorious and powerful Republic of Venice are tranquil; that peace, contentment, and prosperity reign everywhere; that there is no treason to be feared, no conspiracies, seditions, or tumults in the state, as if the question were of inward dangers only, and not of outside snares, outside machinations, open violence, and furious attacks from a formidable and ravenous army."

"We have seen this illustrated in Savoy and in the states of Nice, where this army swooped down upon us, like vultures and ravens upon dead bodies. It wrested these states from the King of Sardinia and stripped them to the bone."

"If the French cross the Alps, I tell you, without being a prophet, that Venice will be devastated, consumed, and destroyed; her name alone will remain in history. Meanwhile the Senate gaze at themselves mirrored in the Lagoon, comb their periwigs, arrange the folds of the toga, without perceiving that terrible volcanic fires smoulder be-

neath the Lagoon, and will yet lash it into such a fury that not a single gondola will survive the general wreck."

"You exaggerate your foreshadowings of danger, my dear Tentori. Venice will be shaken like Piedmont; but the French fury will abate, and all will be arranged."

"No, count, no. When political events are brought about by war or conquest they may be remedied by treaties of peace, taking a portion here, or a little nook there, which is given up to satisfy the appetite of the conquerors; but when the shock is produced by conspiracies of sects and secret machinations, which bring about the downfall of states, the evil is irremediable; the agitation then resembles volcanic cataclysms, which hurl foundations into the air and cast steeples into the depth of an abyss. No political force can repair the consequences of these agitations. The august house of Savoy is sorely tried; perhaps even the royal family is exiled and their kingdom lost; but, as the war comes from without, one day or another its evils may be remedied and the family return to the throne. But Venice, no! The worm of Freemasonry is gnawing the marrow of her bones. As she will not fall by outward violence, she will never arise, for she will be killed by parricidal hands. France will seize this tidbit, preserve it, sweeten it, and, placing it on a beautiful platter, offer it to a great lion, which, in exchange, will give the Jacobin republic a good slice of another cake placed near the French frontier."



“Your reflections are severe, abbé, but only too just; I trust, however, that you are mistaken and that your prophecy may not prove true.”

“God grant it! however, to deliver us from such a danger, God permitted our Chevalier Francesco Pesaro to speak with wonderful power, when in the Senate Chamber he proved to the Senate, with burning eloquence, the danger which lay in remaining thus unarmed; he depicted with such master power the bursting of the storm then gathering over Italy, that the senators felt a thrill of horror pass through them. Whereupon the Wise Councillors Girolamo Zulian, Antonio Zen, Francesco Baltaia, Zanantonio Ruzzini, Zaccaria Valaresso, Alessandro Marcello, rising like dragons spitting fire, cried: ‘No, no! Venice must not be armed; the state has no enemies to fear!’ Then Pietro Pesaro, brother of Francesco, spoke so long and so well, that the Senate declared Venice should be armed by sea and land.”

“Ah! I breathe freely,” cried the count.

“Before breathing freely, count, wait for the end, which is enough to take away the breath of Æolus. Seeing that Pesaro had carried it in favor of armed neutrality, what did the Council of the Wise? One of the members (a Freemason, and the same who a few evenings ago played cards with you at Ca Vendramin) arose and said:

“‘My lords, since the council is obliged in spite of itself to prepare arms, it will be obliged to deceive the Senate by an appearance of acting vigorously without accomplishing anything, according

to the system of Boerhaave, who prescribed that bitter pills should be coated with powdered sugar, that the patient might swallow them without being nauseated.'

“The Wise of the Council and the deputies of the inland states applauded, to the great scandal of the Wise of the Ordinary; but the system of Boerhaave was adopted. Seven thousand militia-men (a fine army, truly!) was raised. No efforts were made to provision the fortresses nor to strengthen the navy. Pesaro was filled with furious indignation at such indolence, and made oration after oration to the Senate; but the Wise had so well deceived the August Congress that the fathers believed themselves well served when nothing had been done.”\*

“Ah, the parricides! the traitors! But who was the member that played with me the other evening at Vendramin's? There were two ladies—Madame Erizzo and Madame Priuli; and the gentlemen were—who? Pisani? No. Condulmer? No. Ah! I remember; it was Piero Donà, with the fresh complexion and fox-like phiz.”

“I do not know, count, but one thing I tell you is that a flood-tide is approaching, and such iniquities will be brought to the open light of day that Italy will be as it were plague-stricken. God

\* Carlo Botta, in his “History of Italy from 1750 to 1814,” said that Zaccaria Valaresso spoke against Pesaro. But he was mistaken; it was Girolamo Zulian, who had sold himself to the French, who had already spoken in favor of the acceptance of a Republican minister, and the raising of the tri-colored flag over the French embassy, and in favor of an alliance with the republic of Robespierre.

grant that she may learn to stop her nostrils and not accustom herself to mistake the odor of conspiracies for that of rose-water !”

The count and the abbé had reached this point of their discourse when they heard the prow of the gondola grating against the shore, and the voice of the gondolier crying without : “ Your excellencies, we are at Murano.”

Murano is a little island a short distance to the north of Venice, upon which are the celebrated glass-works that, in the time of the patricians, were famous throughout Italy. In these manufactories enormous plates of pure crystal, formed from a single piece, were made into mirrors that covered half the wall of great salons ; hence at the end of immense suites of apartments these great reflectors produced an endless perspective. At the present time the Bohemian mirrors, and still more those of St. Petersburg, are so grand and of such exorbitant price that they far surpass the Muranese mirrors ; but at the commencement of our century the latter were the most celebrated, and still remain of purer and better manufacture than those of Bohemia and St. Petersburg.

When our navigators had reached Murano, they entered the manufactories, where d’Almavilla, who knew nothing of the art, examined everything with the greatest attention. The Venetians are the most courteous people in the world. An intelligent young man at once came to meet the count, and explained to him the different operations which constitute the art of glass-making.

The mirrors of Murano are a great source of wealth to Venice, for she sells them to the other nations at a price sometimes exceeding four or five hundred sequins.\*

The count was much pleased with all that he saw ; after having examined everything with great attention, and chosen the mirrors ordered by the Marquis Lascaris, which were of the finest, purest, and largest, he returned to the gondola with the Abbé Tentori, and reached Venice soon after sundown.

The count left the abbé at the Rialto bridge, and, having returned to his quarters, reflected long and seriously on the melancholy results of the perfidious and iniquitous doctrines which he had imbibed himself at Paris in the philosophic school that, before destroying faith in God, destroys love of country, and tramples under foot the sweetest and holiest affections of nature. Unconsciously the abbé had cast the good seed into soil which was indeed sterile and rebellious, but whence some grain might shoot in good time. Always sow the truth ; it may bring forth something sooner or

\* The Galleria and the Quartier Nobile of the Doria Palace, at Rome, have windows of the finest Murano glass. A popular tradition relates that an old Prince Doria, who was once at Venice, was walking one day under the *Procuratie*, and, as it chanced, was simply and even poorly clad ; he entered a glass store, where several gentlemen had met. The prince asked the price of the crystal. The stranger's humble appearance deceived the merchant, who answered : "That is worth a thousand sequins." "I will take them all," replied the stranger ; "I am the Prince Doria ; gentlemen, you can answer for me." The astonished merchant cried : "I was joking, your excellency." "Ah !" cried the prince, "you should not jest with strangers." The prince handed the merchant a bank-bill, and the glass was sent to Rome.

later, for do we not see seeds taking root in the clefts of the steepest rocks, where they were driven by a providential breeze ?\*

\* We are aware that these political discussions will appear too serious to some of our young readers who read for amusement ; but romance often lies among shrubs, though the fingers may be pricked in obtaining the flowers thereof. Let them not weary of these tales ; the past is often the school of the future.

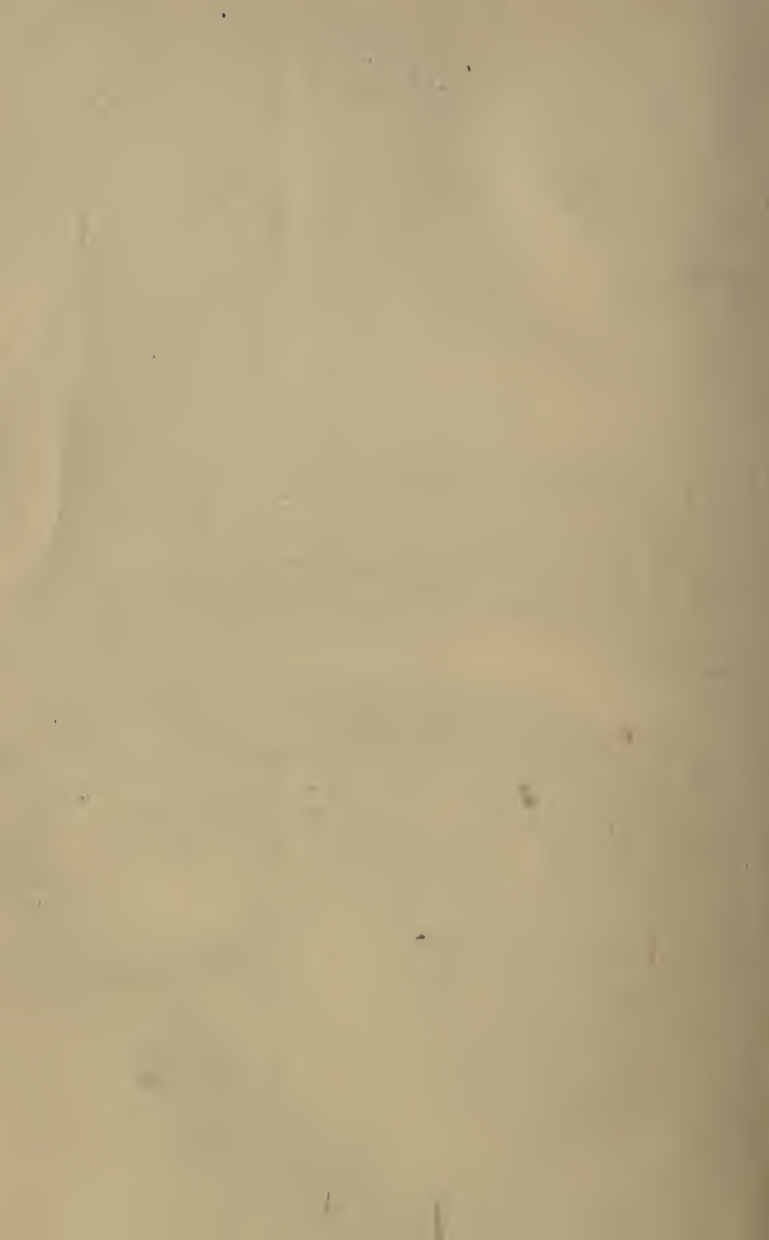












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